

from Ethel J. Reid

to Susie Perrin

with many loving and
grateful thoughts,
hoping some of these
poems may become
Songs & through be-
tune-fulness

June 1930

1901

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A THREEFOLD CORD:

POEMS

BY THREE FRIENDS.

EDITED BY

GEORGE MAC DONALD.

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TO

GREVILLE MATHESON MAC DONALD, M.D.

FIRST, most, to thee, my son, I give this book,
In which a friend's and brother's verses blend
With mine ; for not son only—brother, friend,
Art thou, through sonship which no veil can brook
Between the eyes that in each other look,
Or any shadow 'twixt the hearts that tend
Still nearer, with divine approach, to end
In love eternal, that cannot be shook
When all the shakable shall cease to be.
With growing hope I greet the coming day
When from thy journey done I welcome thee
Who sharest in the names of all the three,
Take thee to them, with hope fulfilled, and say,
Let this man be the fourth with us, I pray.

GEORGE MAC DONALD.

CASA CORAGGIO,
May, 1883.



THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

*Suggested by a drawing of Thomas Moran, the
American painter.*

THIS must be the very night !
The moon knows it !—and the trees—
They stand straight upright,
Each a sentinel drawn up,
As if they dared not know
Which way the wind might blow !
The very pool, with dead gray eye,
Dully expectant, feels it nigh,
And begins to curdle and freeze !
And the dark night,
With its fringe of light,
Holds the secret in its cup !

II. What can it be, to make
The poplars cease to shiver and shake,
And up in the dismal air
Stand straight and stiff as the human hair
When the human soul is dizzy with dread—
All but those two that strain
Aside in a frenzy of speechless pain,
Though never a wind sends out a breath
To tunnel the foggy rheum of death?
What can it be has power to scare
The full-grown moon to the idiot stare
Of a blasted eye in the midnight air?
Something has gone wrong;
A scream will come tearing out ere long!

III. Still as death,
Although I listen with bated breath!
Yet something is coming, I know—is coming;
With an inward soundless humming,
Somewhere in me or in the air—
I cannot tell—but its foot is there!

Marching on to an unheard drumming,
Something is coming—coming—
Growing and coming ;
And the moon is aware—
Aghast in the air
At the thing that is only coming
With an inward soundless humming,
And an unheard spectral drumming !

iv. Nothing to see and nothing to hear !
Only across the inner sky
The wing of a shadowy thought flits by,
Vague and featureless, faceless, drear—
Only a thinness to catch the eye :
Is it a dim foreboding unborn,
Or a buried memory, wasted and worn
As the fading frost of a wintry sigh ?
Anon I shall have it !—anon !—it draws nigh !
A night when—a something it was took place
That drove the blood from that scared moon-face !
Hark ! was that the cry of a goat,

Or the gurgle of water in a throat ?
Hush ! there is nothing to see or hear,
Only a silent something is near ;
No knock, no footsteps three or four,
Only a presence outside the door !
See ! the moon is remembering—what ?
The wail of a mother-left, lie-alone brat ?
Or a raven sharpening its beak to peck ?
Or a cold blue knife and a warm white neck ?
Or only a heart that burst and ceased
For a man that went away released ?
I know not—know not, but something is coming
Somehow back with an inward humming.

v. Ha ! Look there ! Look at that house—
Forsaken of all things—beetle and mouse !
Mark how it looks ! It must have a soul !
It looks, it looks, though it cannot stir ;
See the ribs of it—how they stare !
Its blind eyes yet have a seeing air !
It *knows* it has a soul !

Haggard it hangs o'er the slimy pool,
And gapes wide open as corpses gape :
It is the very murderer !

The ghost has modelled himself to the shape
Of this drear house all sodden with woe,
Where the deed was done, long, long ago,
And filled with himself his new body full—
To haunt for ever his ghastly crime,
And see it come and go—

Brooding around it like motionless time,
With a mouth that gapes, and eyes that yawn
Blar and blintering and full of the moon,
Like one aghast at a hellish dawn.
—It is coming, coming soon !

VI. For, ever and always, when round the tune
Grinds on the barrel of organ-Time,
The deed is done ;—and it comes anon—
True to the roll of the clock-faced moon,
True to the ring of the spheric chime,
True to the cosmic rhythm and rime ;

Every point, as it first went on,
Will come and go till all is gone ;
And palsied with horror from garret to core,
The house cannot shut its gaping door ;
Its burst eye stares as if trying to see,
And it leans as if settling heavily,
Settling heavy with sickness dull :
It also is hearing the soundless humming
Of the wheel that is turning—the thing that is
coming.

On the naked rafters of its brain,
Gaunt and wintred, see the train
Of gossiping, scandal-mongering crows,
That watch, all silent, with necks a-strain,
Wickedly knowing, with heads awry,
And the sharpened gleam of a cunning eye—
Watch, through the cracks of the ruined skull,
How the evil business goes !
—Beyond the eyes of the cherubim,
Beyond the ears of the seraphim,

Outside, forsaken, in the dim
Phantom-haunted chaos grim,
He stands with the deed going on in him !

VII. O winds, winds ! that lurk and peep
Under the edge of the moony fringe !
O winds, winds ! up and sweep ;
Up, and blow and billow the air,
Billow the air with blow and swinge ;
Rend me this ghastly house of groans ;
Rend and scatter the skeleton's bones
Over the deserts and mountains bare ;
Blast and hurl and shiver aside
Nailed sticks and mortared stones ;
Clear the phantom, with torrent and tide,
Out of the moon and out of my brain,
That the light may fall shadowless in again !

VIII. But alas ! then the ghost
O'er mountain and coast
Would go roaming, roaming ; and never was swine,
That, grubbing and talking with snork and whine

On Gadarene mountains, had taken him in,
But would rush to the lake to unhouse the sin
For any charnel

This ghost is too carnal ;
There is no volcano, burnt out and cold,
Whose very ashes are gray and old,
But would cast him forth in reviving flame,
To blister the sky with a smudge of shame.

IX. Is there no help—none anywhere,
Under the earth, or above the air ?
—Come, come, sad woman, whose tender throat
Has a red-lipped mouth that can sing no note !
Child, whose midwife, the third grim Fate,
Shears in hand, thy coming did wait !
Father, with blood-bedabbled hair !
Mother, all withered with love's despair !
Come, broken heart, whatever thou be,
Hasten to help this misery !
Thou wast only murdered, or left forlorn ;
He is a horror, a hate, a scorn !

Come, if out of the holiest blue
That the sapphire throne shines through ;
For pity come, though thy fair feet stand
Next to the elder-band ;
Fling thy harp on the hyaline,
Hurry thee down the spheres divine ;
Come, and drive those ravens away ;
Cover his eyes from the pitiless moon ;
Shadow his brain from her stinging spray ;
Droop around him, a tent of love,
An odour of grace, a fanning dove ;
Walk through the house with the healing tune
Of gentle footsteps ; banish the shape
Remorse calls up, thyself to ape ;
Comfort him, dear, with pardon sweet ;
Cool his heart from its burning heat
With the water of life that laves the feet
Of the throne of God, and the holy street.

x. O God, he is but a living blot,
Yet he lives by thee—for if thou wast not,

They would vanish together, self-forgot,
He and his crime :—one breathing blown
From thy spirit on his would all atone,
Scatter the horror, and bring relief
In an amber dawn of holy grief :
God, give him sorrow ; arise from within :
Art thou not in him, silence in din,
Stronger than anguish, deeper than sin ?

XI. Why do I tremble, a creature at bay !
'Tis but a dream—I drive it away.
Back comes my breath, and my heart again
Pumps the red blood to my fainting brain
Released from the nightmare's nine-fold train ;
God is in heaven—yes, everywhere ;
And Love, the all-shining, will kill Despair.
To the wall's blank eyeless space
I turn the picture's face.

XII. But why is the moon so bare, up there ?
And why is she so white ?
And why does the moon so stare, up there—

Strangely stare, out of the night ?
Why stand up the poplars
That still way ?
And why do those two of them
Start astray ?
And out of the black why hangs the gray ?
Why does it hang down so, I say,
Over that house, like a fringed pall
Where the dead goes by in a funeral ?
—Soul of mine,
Thou the reason canst divine :—
Into *thee* the moon doth stare
With pallid, terror-smitten air :
Thou, and the Horror lonely-stark,
Outcast of eternal dark,
Are in nature same and one,
And *thy* story is not done !
So let the picture face thee from the wall,
And let its white moon stare.

IN THE WINTER.

IN the winter, flowers are springing ;
In the winter, woods are green,
Where our banished birds are singing,
Where our summer sun is seen !
Our cold midnights are coeval
With an evening and a morn
Where the forest-gods hold revel,
And the spring is newly born !

While the earth is full of fighting,
While men rise and curse their day,
While the foolish strong are smiting,
And the foolish weak betray—

The true hearts beyond are growing,
The brave spirits work alone,
Where Love's summer-wind is blowing
In a truth-irradiate zone !

While we cannot shape our living
To the beauty of our skies,
While man wants and earth is giving—
Nature calls and man denies—
How the old worlds round Him gather
Where their Maker is their sun !
How the children know the Father,
Where the will of God is done !

Daily woven with our story,
Sounding far above our strife,
Is a time-enclosing glory,
Is a space-absorbing life.

We can dream no dream Elysian,
There is no good thing might be,
But some angel has the vision,
But some human soul shall see !

Is thy strait horizon dreary ?
Is thy foolish fancy chill ?
Change the feet that have grown weary
For the wings that never will.
Burst the flesh, and live the spirit ;
Haunt the beautiful and far ;
Thou hast all things to inherit,
And a soul for every star.

CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1878.

I THINK I might be weary of this day
That comes inevitably every year,
The same when I was young and strong and gay,
The same when I am old and growing sere—
I should grow weary of it every year,
But that thou comest to me every day.

I shall grow weary if thou every day
But come to me, Lord of eternal life ;
I shall grow weary thus to watch and pray,
For ever out of labour into strife ;
Take everlasting house with me, my life,
And I shall be new-born this Christmas-day.

Thou art the eternal Son, and born no day,
But ever he the Father, thou the Son ;
I am his child, but being born alway—
How long, O Lord, how long till it be done !
Be thou from endless years to years the Son—
And I thy brother, new-born every day.

BE welcome, year ! with corn and sickle come ;
Make poor the body, but make rich the heart :
What man that bears his sheaves, gold-nodding,
home,
Will heed the paint rubbed from his groaning
cart !

Nor leave behind thy fears and holy shames,
Thy sorrows on the horizon hanging low—
Gray gathered fuel for the sunset-flames,
When joyous in death's harvest-home we go.

TWO RONDELS.

I.

WHEN on the mid sea of the night,
I waken at thy call, O Lord,
The first that troop my bark aboard
Are darksome imps that hate the light,
Whose tongues are arrows, eyes a blight—
Of wraths and cares a pirate horde—
Though on the mid sea of the night
It was thy call that waked me, Lord.

Then I must to my arms and fight—
Catch up my shield and two-edged sword,
The words of him who is thy word ;
Nor cease till they are put to flight ;—
Then in the mid sea of the night
I turn and listen for thee, Lord.

II.

There comes no voice from thee, O Lord,
Across the mid sea of the night !
I lift my voice and cry with might :
If thou keep silent, soon a horde
Of imps again will swarm aboard,
And I shall be in sorry plight,
If no voice come from thee, O Lord,
Across the mid sea of the night.

There comes no voice ; I hear no word !
But in my soul dawns something bright :—
There is no sea, no foe to fight !
Thy heart and mine beat one accord :
I need no voice from thee, O Lord,
Across the mid sea of the night.

RONDEL.

HEART, thou must learn to do without—
That is the riches of the poor ;

Their liberty is to endure ;
Wrap thou thy old cloak thee about,
And carol loud, and carol stout ;
Let thy rags fly, nor wish them fewer—
Till thou hast learned to do without,
And earned the riches of the poor.

Why shouldst thou only wear no clout ?
Thou only walk in love-robcs pure?
Thy step alone be firm and sure ?
Thou only free of fortune's flout ?
Nay, nay ! but learn to go without,
And so be humbly, richly poor.

LIGHTER and sweeter

Let your song be ;
And for sorrow—oh, cheat her
With melody !

SMOKE.

LORD, I have laid my heart upon thy altar,
But cannot get the wood to burn ;
It hardly flares ere it begins to falter,
And to the dark return.

Old sap, or night-fallen dew, has damped the fuel ;
In vain my breath would flame provoke !
Yet see—at every poor attempt's renewal,
To thee ascends the smoke !

'Tis all I have—smoke, failure, foiled endeavour,
Coldness and doubt and palsied lack :
Such as I have I send thee !—perfect giver,
Send thou thy lightning back.

THE LAVEROCK.

The Man says :

LAVEROCK i' the lift,
Hae ye nae sang-thrift,
'At ye scatter 't sae heigh, an' lat it a' drift ?

Wasterfu' laverock !

Dinna ye ken
'At ye hing ower men
Wha haena a sang or a penny to spen' ?
Hertless laverock !

But up there, you,
I' the bow o' the blue,
Haud skirlin' on as gien a' war new !
Toom-heidit laverock !

Haith ! ye're ower blythe :

I see a great scythe

Swing whaur yer nestie lies, doon i' the lythe,

Liltin' laverock !

Eh, sic a soon' !

Birdie, come doon—

Ye're fey to sing sic a merry tune,

Gowkit laverock !

Come to yer nest ;

Yer wife 's sair prest ;

She's clean worn oot wi' duin' her best,

Rovin' laverock !

Winna ye haud ?

Ye're surely mad !

Is there naeboddy there to gie ye a daud,

Menseless laverock ?

Come doon an' conform ;
Pyke an honest worm ;
An' hap yer bairns frae the muckle storm,
Spendrife laverock !

The Bird sings :

My nestie it lieth
I' the how o' a han' ;
The swing o' the scythe
'Ill miss 't by a span.

The lift it's sae cheery !
The win' it 's sae free !
I hing ower my dearie,
An' sing 'cause I see.

My wifie's wee breistie
Grows warm wi' my sang,
An' ilk crumpled-up beastie
Kens no to think lang.

Up here the sun sings, but
He only shines there !
Ye haena nae wings, but
Come up on a prayer.

The Man sings :

Ye wee daurin' cratur,
Ye rant an' ye sing
Like an oye o' auld Natur
Ta'en hame by the king !

Ye wee feathert priestie,
Yer bells i' yer thro't,
Yer altar yer breistie,
Yer mitre forgot—

Offerin' an' Aaron,
Ye burn hert an' brain ;
An' dertin' an' daurin',
Flee back to yer ain !

Ye wee minor prophet,
It 's 'maist my belief
'At I 'm doon i' Tophet,
An' you abune grief!

Ye 've deavt me an' daudit,
An' ca'd me a fule:
I 'm nearhan' persuaudit
To gang to your schule.

For, birdie, I 'm thinkin'
Ye ken mair nor me—
Gien ye haena been drinkin',
An' sing as ye see.

Ye maun hae a sicht 'at
Sees geyan far ben;
An' a hert for the micht o' 't
Wad sair for nine men!

Somebody's been til
Roun to ye wha
Said birdies war seen til
E'en whan they fa' !

TO A CERTAIN CRITIC.

SUCH guests as you, sir, were not in my mind
When I my homely dish with care designed ;
'T was certain humble souls I would have fed,
Who do not turn from wholesome milk and bread ;
You came, slow-trotting on the narrow way,
O'erturned the food, and trod it in the clay ;
Then low with discoid nostrils sniffing curt,
Cried, " Sorry cook ! why, what a mess of dirt ! "

SONG.

SHE loves thee, loves thee not !

That—that is all, my heart.

Why should she take a part

In every selfish blot,

In every greedy spot,

That now doth ache and smart

Because she loves thee not—

Not, not at all, poor heart !

Thou art no such dove-cot

Of virtues—no such chart

Of high ways, though the dart

Of love be through thee shot !

Why should she not love not

Thee, poor, pinched, selfish heart ?

A CRY.

LORD, hear my discontent : all blank I stand,
A mirror polished by thy hand ;
Thy sun's beams flash and flame from me—
I cannot help it : here I stand, there he ;
To one of them I cannot say,
Go, and on yonder water play !
Nor one poor ragged daisy can I fashion—
I do not make the words of this my limping
passion.
If I should say, now I will think a thought,
Lo ! I must wait, unknowing,
What thought in me is growing,
Until the thing to birth is brought ;

Nor know I then what next will come
From out the gulf of silence dumb.
I am the door the thing did find
To pass into the general mind ;
I cannot say I think—
I only stand upon the thought-well's brink ;
From darkness to the sun the water bubbles up—
I lift it in my cup.
Thou only thinkest—I am thought ;
Me and my thought thou thinkest. Nought
Am I but as a fountain spout
From which thy water welleteth out.
Thou art the only one, the all in all.
—Yet when my soul on thee doth call
And thou dost answer out of everywhere,
I in thy allness have my perfect share.

SOME men there are who cannot spare
A single tear until they feel
The last cold pressure, and the heel
Is stamped upon the outmost layer.

And, waking, some will sigh to think
The clouds have borrowed winter's wing,--
Sad winter, when the grasses spring
No more about the fountain's brink.

And some would call me coward fool :
I lay a claim to better blood ;
But yet a heap of idle mud
Hath power to make me sorrowful.

TO MY MOTHER EARTH.

O EARTH, earth, earth,

I am dying for love of thee,
For thou hast given me birth,
And thy hands have tended me.

I would fall asleep on thy breast
When its swelling folds are bare,
When the thrush dreams of its nest
And the life of its joy in the air ;

When thy life is a vanished ghost,
And the glory hath left thy waves,
When thine eye is blind with frost,
And the fog sits on the graves ;

When the blasts are shivering about,
And the rain thy branches beats,
When the damps of death are out,
And the mourners are in the streets.

Oh my sleep should be deep
In the arms of thy swiftening motion,
And my dirge the mystic sweep
Of the winds that nurse the ocean.

And my eye would slowly ope
With the voice that awakens thee,
And runs like a glance of hope
Up through the quickening tree ;

When the roots of the lonely fir
Are dipt in thy veining heat,
And thy countless atoms stir
With the gather of mossy feet ;

When the sun's great censer swings
In the hands that always be,
And the mists from thy watery rings
Go up like dust from the sea ;

When the midnight airs are assembling
With a gush in thy whispering halls,
And the leafy air is trembling
Like a stream before it falls.

Thy shadowy hand hath found me
On the drifts of the Godhead's will,
And thy dust hath risen around me
With a life that guards me still.

O earth ! I have caught from thine
The pulse of a mystic chase ;
O earth ! I have drunk like wine
The life of thy swiftening race.

Wilt miss me, mother sweet,

A life in thy milky veins ?

Wilt miss the sound of my feet

In the tramp that shakes thy plains

When the jaws of darkness rend,

And the vapours fold away,

And the sounds of life ascend

Like dust in the blinding day ?

I would know thy silver strain

In the shouts of the starry crowd

When the souls of thy changing men

Rise up like an incense cloud.

I would know thy brightening lobes,

And the lap of thy watery bars,

Though space were choked with globes,

And the night were blind with stars.

From the folds of my unknown place,
When my soul is glad and free,
I will slide by my God's sweet grace
And hang like a cloud on thee.

When the pale moon sits at night
By the brink of her shining well,
Laving the rings of her widening light
On the slopes of the weltering swell,

I will fall like a wind from the west
On the locks of thy prancing streams,
And sow the fields of thy rest
With handfuls of sweet young dreams.

When the sound of thy children's cry
Hath stricken thy gladness dumb,
I will kindle thine upward eye
With a laugh from the years that come.

Far above where the loud wind raves,
On a wing as still as snow
I will watch the grind of the curly waves
As they bite the coasts below.

When the shining ranks of the frost
Draw down on the glistening wold
In the mail of a fairy host,
And the earth is mossed with cold,

Till the plates that shine about
Close up with a filmy din,
Till the air is frozen out,
And the stars are frozen in,

I will often stoop to range
On the fields where my youth was spent,
And my feet shall smite the cliffs of change
With the rush of a steep descent.

And my glowing soul shall burn
 With a love that knows no pall,
And my eye of worship turn
 Upon him that fashioned all—

When the sounding waves of strife
 Have died on the Godhead's sea,
And thy life is a purer life
 That nurses a life in me.

MAKE not of thy heart a casket,
Opening seldom, quick to close ;
But of bread a wide-mouthed basket,
Or a cup that overflows.

O LORD, HOW HAPPY !

From the German of Dessler.

O LORD, how happy is the time

When in thy love I rest !

When from my weariness I climb

Even to thy tender breast !

The night of sorrow endeth there—

Thou art brighter than the sun ;

And in thy pardon and thy care,

The heaven of heaven is won.

Let the world call herself my foe,

Or let the world allure—

I care not for the world ; I go

To this dear friend and sure.

And when life's fiercest storms are sent
 Upon life's wildest sea,
My little bark is confident,
 Because it holds by thee.

When the law threatens endless death
 Upon the dreadful hill,
Straightway from her consuming breath
 My soul goeth higher still—
Goeth to Jesus, wounded, slain,
 And maketh him her home,
Whence she will not go out again,
 And where death cannot come.

I do not fear the wilderness
 Where thou hast been before ;
Nay rather will I daily press
 After thee, near thee, more !
Thou art my food ; on thee I lean ;
 Thou makest my heart sing ;

And to thy heavenly pastures green
All thy dear flock dost bring.

And if the gate that opens there
Be dark to other men,
It is not dark to those who share
The heart of Jesus then :
That is not losing much of life
Which is not losing thee,
Who art as present in the strife
As in the victory.

Therefore how happy is the time
When in thy love I rest !
When from my weariness I climb
Even to thy tender breast !
The night of sorrow endeth there—
Thou art brighter than the sun !
And in thy pardon and thy care
The heaven of heaven is won !

NO SIGN.

O LORD, if on the wind, at cool of day,
I heard one whispered word of mighty grace ;
If through the darkness, as in bed I lay,
But once had come a hand upon my face ;

If but one sign that might not be mistook
Had ever been, since first thy face I sought,
I should not now be doubting o'er a book,
But serving thee with burning heart and thought

So dreams that heart. But to my heart I say,
Turning my face to front the dark and wind :
Such signs had only barred anew his way
Into thee, longing heart, thee, wildered mind.

They asked the very way, where lies the way?

The very Son, where is the Father's face?

How he could show himself, if not in clay,

Who was the lord of spirit, form, and space !

My being, Lord, will nevermore be whole

Until thou come behind mine ears and eyes,

Enter and fill the temple of my soul

With perfect contact—such a sweet surprise—

Such presence as, before it met the view,

The prophet-fancy could not once foresee,

Though every corner of the temple knew

By very emptiness its need of thee.

When I keep *all* thy words, no favoured some—

Heedless of worldly winds or judgment's tide,

Then, Jesus, thou wilt with thy father come—

Oh, ended prayers !—and in my soul abide.

Ah, long delay ! ah, cunning, creeping sin !
I shall but fail, and cease at length to try :
O Jesus ! though thou wilt not yet come in,
Knock at my window as thou passest by.

METHOUGHT I floated sightless, nor did know
That I had ears until I heard the cry
As of a mighty man in agony :
“ How long, Lord, shall I lie thus foul and slow ?
The arrows of thy lightning through me go,
And sting and torture me—yet here I lie
A shapeless mass that scarce can mould a sigh ! ”
The darkness thinned ; I saw a thing below,
Like sheeted corpse, a knot at head and feet.
Slow clomb the sun the mountains of the dead,
And looked upon the world : the silence broke !
A blinding struggle ! then the thunderous beat
Of great exulting pinions stroke on stroke !
And from that world a mighty ange fled.

NOVEMBER, 1851.

WHAT dost thou here, O soul,
Beyond thy own control,
Under the strange wild sky ?
O stars, reach down your hands,
And clasp me in your silver bands,
I tremble with this mystery !—
Flung hither by a chance
Of restless circumstance,
Thou art but here, and wast not sent ;
Yet once more mayest thou draw
By thy own mystic law
To the centre of thy wonderment.
Why wilt thou stop and start ?
Draw nearer, oh my heart,

And I will question thee most wistfully ;
Gather thy last clear resolution
To look upon thy dissolution.

The great God's life throbs far and free,
And thou art but a spark
Known only in thy dark,
Or a foam-fleck upon the awful ocean,
Thyself thy slender dignity,
Thy own thy vexing mystery,
In the vast change that is not change but motion.

'Tis not so hard as it would seem ;
Thy life is but a dream—
And yet thou hast some thoughts about the past ;
Let go, let go thy memories,
They are not things but wandering cries—
Wave them each one a long farewell at last :
I hear thee say—" Take them, O tide,
And I will turn aside,
Gazing with heedlessness, nay even with laughter !
Bind me, ye winds and storms,

Among the things that once had forms,
And carry me clean out of sight thereafter !”

Thou hast lived long enough
To know thy own weak stuff,
Laughing thy fondest joys to utter scorn ;
Give up the idle strife—
It is but mockery of life ;
The fates had need of thee and thou wast born :
They are, in sooth, but thou shalt die.
O wandering spark ! O homeless cry !
O empty will, still lacking self-intent !
Look up among the autumn trees :
The ripened fruits fall through the breeze,
And they will shake thee even like these
Into the lap of an Accomplishment !

Thou hadst a faith, and voices said :—
“ Doubt not *that* truth, but bend thy head
Unto the God who drew thee from the night : ”
Thou liftedst up thy eyes—and, lo !
A host of voices answered—“ No ;

A thousand things as good have seen the light !”
Look how the swarms arise
From every clod before thy eyes !
Are thine the only hopes that fade and fall
When to the centre of its action
One purpose draws each separate fraction,
And nothing but effects are left at all !
Aha, thy faith ! what is thy faith ?
The sleep that waits on coming death—
A blind delirious swoon that follows pain.
‘ True to thy nature ! ’—well ! right well !
But what that nature is thou canst not tell—
It has a thousand voices in thy brain.
Danced all the leaflets to and fro ?
—Thy feet have trod them long ago !
Sprung the glad music up the blue ?
—The hawk hath cut the song in two
All the mountains crumble,
All the forests fall,
All thy brethren stumble,

And rise no more at all !
In the dim woods there is a sound
When the winds begin to moan ;
It is not of joy or yet of mirth,
But the mournful cry of our mother Earth,
As she calleth back her own.
Through the rosy air to-night
The living creatures play
Up and down through the rich faint light—
None so happy as they !
But the blast is here, and noises fall
Like the sound of steps in a ruined hall,
An icy touch is upon them all,
And they sicken and fade away.

The child awoke with an eye of gladness,
With a light on his head and a matchless grace,
And laughed at the passing shades of sadness
That chased the smiles on his mother's face ;
And life with its lightsome load of youth
Swam like a boat on a shining lake—

Freighted with hopes enough in sooth ;
But he lived to trample on joy and truth,
And change his crown for a murder-stake !

Oh, a ruddy light went through the room,
Till the dark ran out to his mother Night !
And that little chamber showed through the gloom
Like a Noah's ark with its nest of light !
Right glad was the maiden there, I wis,
With the youth that held her hand in his !
Oh, sweet were the words that went and came
Through the light and shade of the leaping flame
That glowed on the cheerful faces !
So human the speech, so sunny and kind,
That the darkness danced on the wall behind,
And even the wail of the winter wind
Sang sweet through the window-cases !

But a mournful wail crept round and round,
And a voice cried :—"Come !" with a dreary sound,
And the circle wider grew ;
The light flame sank, and sorrow fell

On the faces of those that loved so well ;
Darker and wilder grew the tone ;
Fainter and fainter the faces shone ;
The wild night clasped them, and they were gone—
And thou art passing too !

Lo, the morning slowly springs
Like a meek white babe from the womb of night
One golden planet sits and stings
The shifting gloom with his point of light !
Lo, the sun on his throne of flame !
—Wouldst thou climb and win a crown ?
Oh, many a heart that pants for the same
Falls to the earth ere he goes down !
Thy heart is a flower with an open cup—
Sit and watch if it pleaseth thee,
Till the melting twilight fill it up
With a crystal of tender sympathy ;
So, gently will it tremble
The silent midnight through,
And flocks of stars assemble

By turns in its depths of dew ;—
But look ! oh, look again !
After the driving wind and rain !
When the day is up and the sun is strong,
And the voices of men are loud and long,
When the flower hath slunk to its rest again,
And love is lost in the strife of men !

Let the morning break with thoughts of love,
And the evening fall with dreams of bliss—
So vainly panteth the prisoned dove
For the depths of her sweet wilderness ;
So stoops the eagle in his pride
From his rocky nest ere the bow is bent ;
So sleeps the deer on the mountain side
Ere the howling pack hath caught the scent !

The fire climbs high till its work is done ;
The stalk falls down when the flower is gone ;
And the stars of heaven when their course is run
Melt silently away !
There was a footfall on the snow,

A line of light on the ocean flow,
And a billow's dash on the rocks below
That stand by the wintry bay :—
The snow was gone on the coming night ;
Another wave arose in his might,
Uplifted his foaming breast of white,
And died like the rest for aye !

Oh the stars were bright ! and thyself in thee
Yearned for an immortality !
And the thoughts that drew from thy busy brain
Clasped the worlds like an endless chain—
When a moon arose, and her moving chime
Smote on thy soul, like a word in time,
Or a breathless wish, or a thought in rime,
And the truth that looked so gloomy and high
Leapt to thy arms with a joyful cry !
But what wert thou when a soulless Cause
Opened the book of its barren laws ?
And thy spirit that was so glad and free
Was caught in the gin of necessity,

And a howl arose from the strife of things
Vexing each other with scorpion stings ?
What wert thou but an orphan child
Thrust from the door when the night was wild ?
Or a sailor on the toiling main,
Looking blindly up through the wind and rain,
As the hull of the vessel fell in twain !

Seals are on the book of fate,
Hands may not unbind it ;
Eyes may search for truth till late,
But will never find it—
Rising on the brow of night,
Like a portent of dismay,
As the worlds in wild affright
Track it on its direful way ;
Resting like a rainbow bar
Where the curve and level meet,
As the children chase it far
O'er the sands with blistered feet ;
Sadly through the mist of ages

Gazing on this life of fear,
Doubtful shining on its pages,
Only seen to disappear !
Sit thee by the sounding shore
—Winds and waves of human breath !—
Learn a lesson from their roar,
Swelling, bursting evermore :
Live thy life and die thy death !
Die not like the writhing worm,
Rise and win thy highest stake ;
Better perish in the storm
Than sit rotting on the lake !
Triumph in thy present youth,
Pulse of fire and heart of glee ;
Leap at once into the truth,
If there is a truth for thee.

Shapeless thoughts and dull opinions,
Slow distinctions and degrees,—
Vex not thou thy weary pinions
With such leaden weights as these—

Through this mystic jurisdiction
Reaching out a hand by chance,
Resting on a dull conviction
Whetted but by ignorance ;
Living ever to behold
Mournful eyes that watch and weep ;
Spirit suns that flashed in gold
Failing from the vasty deep ;
Starry lights that glowed like truth
Gazing with unnumbered eyes,
Melting from the skies of youth,
Swallowed up of mysteries ;
Cords of love that sweetly bound thee ;
Faded writing on thy brow ;
Presences that came around thee ;
Hands of faith that fail thee now !

Groping hands will ever find thee
In the night with loads of chains,
Lift thy fetters and unbind thee,
Cast thee on the midnight plains :

Shapes of vision all-providing—
Famished cheeks and hungry cries !
Sound of crystal waters sliding—
Thirsty lips and bloodshot eyes !
Empty forms that send no gleaming
Through the mystery of this strife !—
Oh, in such a life of seeming,
Death were worth an endless life !
Hark the trumpet of the ocean
Where glad lands were wont to be !
Many voices of commotion
Break in tumult over thee !
Lo, they climb the frowning ages,
Marching o'er their level lands !
Far behind the strife that rages,
Silence sits with clasped hands :
Undivided purpose, freeing
His own steps from hindrances,
Sending out great floods of being,
Bathes thy steps in silentness.

Sit thee down in mirth and laughter—
One there is that waits for thee ;
If there is a true hereafter
He will lend thee eyes to see.

Like a snow-flake gently falling
On a quiet fountain,
Or a weary echo calling
From a distant mountain,
Drop thy hands in peace,—
Fail—falter—cease.

OF ONE WHO DIED IN SPRING.

LOOSENER of springs, he died by thee !
Softness not hardness sent him home ;
He loved thee—and thou mad'st him free
Of all the place thou comest from !

AN AUTUMN SONG.

ARE the leaves falling round about
The churchyard on the hill?
Is the glow of autumn going out?
Is that the winter chill?
And yet through winter's noise, no doubt
The graves are very still!

Are the woods empty, voiceless, bare?
On sodden leaves do you tread?
Is nothing left of all those fair?
Is the whole Summer fled?
Well, so from this unwholesome air
Have gone away these dead!

The seasons pierce me ; like a leaf
I feel the autumn blow,
And tremble between nature's grief
And the silent death below.
O Summer, thou art very brief !
Where do these exiles go ?

Gilesgate, Durham.

TRIOLET.

FEW in joy's sweet riot
Able are to listen :
Thou, to make me quiet,
Quenchest the sweet riot,
Tak'st away my diet,
Puttest me in prison—
Quenchest joy's sweet riot,
That the heart may listen.

I SEE THEE NOT.

YES, Master, when thou comest thou shalt find
A little faith on earth, if I am here !
Thou know'st how oft I turn to thee my mind,
How sad I wait until thy face appear !

Hast thou not ploughed my thorny ground full sore
And from it gathered many stones and sherds ?
Plough, plough and harrow till it needs no more—
Then sow thy mustard-seed, and send thy birds

I love thee, Lord ; and if I yield to fears,
Nor trust with triumph that pale doubt defies,
Remember, Lord, 'tis nigh two thousand years,
And I have never seen thee with mine eyes.

And when I lift them from the wondrous tale,

See, all about me hath so strange a show !

Is that thy river running down the vale ?

Is that thy wind that through the pines doth
blow ?

Could'st thou right verily appear again,

The same who walked the paths of Palestine,

And here in England teach thy trusting men,

In church and field and house, with word and
sign ?

Here are but lilies, sparrows, and the rest !

My hands on some dear proof would light and
stay !

But my heart sees John leaning on thy breast,

And sends them forth to do what thou dost say.

A BROKEN PRAYER.

O LORD, my God, how long
Shall my poor heart pant for a boundless joy ?
How long, O mighty Spirit, shall I hear
The murmur of Truth's crystal waters slide
From the deep caverns of their endless being,
But my lips taste not, and the grosser air
Choke each pure inspiration of thy will ?

I am a denseness 'twixt me and the light ;
I cannot round myself ; my purest thought,
Ere it is thought, hath caught the taint of earth,
And mocked me with hard thoughts beyond my will

I would be a wind
Whose smallest atom is a viewless wing,
All busy with the pulsing life that throbs

To do thy bidding ; yea, or the meanest thing
That has relation to a changeless truth,
Could I but be instinct with thee—each thought
The lightning of a pure intelligence,
And every act as the loud thunder-clap
Of currents warring for a vacuum.

Lord, clothe me with thy truth as with a robe ;
Purge me with sorrow ; I will bend my head
And let the nations of thy waves pass over,
Bathing me in thy consecrated strength ;
And let thy many-voiced and silver winds
Pass through my frame with their clear influence.
O save me ; I am blind ; lo, thwarting shapes
Wall up the void before, and thrusting out
Lean arms of unshaped expectation, beckon
Down to the night of all unholy thoughts.

Oh, when at midnight one of thy strong angels
Stems back the waves of earthly influence
That shape unsteady continents around me,
And they draw off with the devouring gush

Of exile billows that have found a home,
Leaving me islanded on unseen points,
Hanging 'twixt thee and chaos—I have seen
Unholy shapes lop off my shining thoughts,
And they have lent me leathern wings of fear,
Of baffled pride and harrowing distrust ;
And Godhead, with its crown of many stars,
Its pinnacles of flaming holiness,
And voice of leaves in the green summer-time,
Has seemed the shadowed image of a self !
Then my soul blackened ; and I rose to find
And grasp my doom, and cleave the arching deeps
Of desolation.

O Lord, my soul is a forgotten well,
Clad round with its own rank luxuriance ;
A fountain a kind sunbeam searches for,
Sinking the lustre of its arrowy finger
Through the long grass its own strange virtue
Hath blinded up its crystal eye withal :
Make me a broad strong river coming down

With shouts from its high hills, whose rocky hearts
Throb forth the joy of their stability
In watery pulses from their inmost deeps ;
And I shall be a vein upon thy world,
Circling perpetual from the parent deep.

Most mighty One,
Confirm and multiply my thoughts of good ;
Help me to wall each sacred treasure round
With the firm battlements of special action.
Alas, my holy happy thoughts of thee
Make not perpetual nest within my soul,
But like strange birds of dazzling colours stoop
The trailing glories of their sunward speed,
For one glad moment filling my blasted boughs
With the sunshine of their wings. Make me a
forest

Of gladdest life wherein perpetual spring
Lifts up her leafy tresses in the wind.

Lo, now I see

Thy trembling starlight sit among my pines,

And thy young moon slide down my arching boughs
With a soft sound of restless eloquence !
And I can feel a joy as when thy hosts
Of trampling winds, gathering in maddened bands,
Roar upward through the blue and flashing day
Round my still depths of uncleft solitude.

Hear me, O Lord,
When the black night draws down upon my soul,
And voices of temptation darken down
The misty wind, slamming thy starry doors
With bitter jests :—“Thou fool !” they seem to say,
“Thou hast no seed of goodness in thee ; all
“Thy nature hath been stung right through and
through ;
“Thy sin hath blasted thee and made thee old ;
“Thou hadst a will, but thou hast killed it dead,
“And with the fulsome garniture of life
“Built out the loathsome corpse ; thou art a child
“Of night and death, even lower than a worm ;
“Gather the skirts up of thy shadowy self,

“And with what resolution thou hast left

“Fall on the damned spikes of doom !”

O take me like a child,

If thou hast made me for thyself, my God,

And lead me up thy hills : I shall not fear,

So thou wilt make me pure, and beat back sin

With the terrors of thine eye : it fears me not

As once it might have feared thine own good image,

But lays bold siege at my heart's doors.

Oh, I have seen a thing of beauty stand

In the young moonlight of its upward thoughts,

And the old earth came round it with its gifts

Of gladness, whispering leaves, and odorous plants,

Until its large and spiritual eye

Burned with intensest love ; my God, I could

Have watched it evermore with Argus' eyes,

Lest when the noontide of the summer's sun

Let down the tented sunlight on the plain,

His flaming beams should scorch my darling flower ;

And through the fruitless nights of leaden gloom,

Of plashing rains, and knotted winds of cold,
Yea, when thy lightnings ran across the sky,
And the loud stumbling blasts fell from the hills
Upon the mounds of death, I could have watched
Guarding such beauty like another life !

But, O my God, it changed !—

Yet methinks I know not if it was not I !

Its beauty turned to ghastly loathsomeness !

Then a hand spurned me backwards from the clouds,
And with the gather of a mighty whirlwind,
Drew in the glittering gifts of life.

How long, O Lord, how long ?

I am a man lost in a rocky place !

Lo, all thy echoes smite me with confusion
Of varied speech,—the cry of vanished Life
Rolled upon nations' sighs—of hearts uplifted
Against despair—the stifled sounds of Woe
Sitting perpetual by its grey cold well—
Or wasted Toil climbing its endless hills
With quickening gasps—or the thin winds of Joy

That beat about the voices of the crowd !

Lord, hast thou sent

Thy moons to mock us with perpetual hope?

Lighted within our breasts the love of love

To make us ripen for despair, my God ?

Oh, dost thou hold each individual soul

Strung clear upon thy flaming rods of purpose ?

Or does thine inextinguishable will

Stand on the steeps of night with lifted hand

Filling the yawning wells of monstrous space

With mixing thought—drinking up single life

As in a cup? and from the rending folds

Of glimmering purpose, do all thy navied stars

Slide through the gloom with mystic melody,

Like wishes on a brow? Oh, is my soul,

Hung like a dewdrop in thy grassy ways,

Drawn up again into the rack of change

Even through the lustre which created it?

—O mighty one, thou wilt not smite me through

With scorching wrath, because my spirit stands

Bewildered in thy circling mysteries !

O lift the burdened gloom that chokes my soul
With dews of darkness ; smite the lean winds of death
That run with howls around the ruined temples,
Blowing the souls of men about like leaves.

Lo, the broad life-lands widen overhead,
Star-galaxies arise like drifting snow,
And happy life goes whitening down the stream
Of boundless action, whilst my fettered soul
Sits, as a captive in a noisome dungeon
Watches the pulses of his withered heart
Lave out the sparkling minutes of his life
On the idle flags !

Come in the glory of thine excellence,
Rive the dense gloom with wedges of clear light,
And let the shimmer of thy chariot wheels
Burn through the cracks of night ! So slowly, Lord,
To lift myself to thee with hands of toil,
Climbing the slippery cliffs of unheard prayer !
Lift up a hand among my idle days—

One beckoning finger : I will cast aside
The clogs of earthly circumstance and run
Up the broad highways where the countless worlds
Sit ripening in the summer of thy love.

Send a clear meaning sparkling through the years ;
Burst all the prison-doors, and make men's hearts
Gush up like fountains with thy melody ;
Brighten the hollow eyes ; fill with life's fruits
The hands that grope and scramble down the
wastes ;

And let the ghastly troops of withered ones
Come shining o'er the mountains of thy love.

Lord, thy strange mysteries come thickening down
Upon my head like snow-flakes, shutting out
The happy upper fields with chilly vapour.
Shall I content my soul with a weak sense
Of safety ? or feed my ravenous hunger with
Sore purged hopes, that are not hopes but fears
Clad in white raiment ?

The creeds lie in the hollow of men's hearts

Like festering pools glassing their own corruption;
The slimy eyes stare up with dull approval,
And answer not when thy bright starry feet
Move on the watery floors : oh, shake men's souls
Together like the gathering of all oceans
Rent from their hidden chambers ; till the waves
Lift up their million voices of high joy
Along the echoing cliffs : come thus, O Lord,
With nightly gifts of stars, and lay a hand
Of mighty peace upon the quivering flood.

O wilt thou hear me when I cry to thee?
I am a child lost in a mighty forest ;
The air is thick with voices, and strange hands
Reach through the dusk, and pluck me by the skirts.
There is a voice which sounds like words from home,
But, as I stumble on to reach it, seems
To leap from rock to rock : oh, if it is
Willing obliquity of sense, descend,
Heal all my wanderings, take me by the hand,
And lead me homeward through the shadows.

Let me not by my wilful acts of pride
Block up the windows of thy truth, and grow
A wasted, withered thing, that stumbles on
Down to the grave with folded hands of sloth
And leaden confidence.

STILL am I haunting
Thy door with my prayers ;
Still they are panting
Up thy steep stairs !
Wouldst thou not rather
Come down to my heart,
And there, O my Father,
Be what thou art ?

A THANKSGIVING FOR F. D. MAURICE.

THE veil hath lifted and hath fallen ; and him
Who next it stood before us, first so long,
We see not ; but between the cherubim
The light burns clearer : come—a thankful song !

Lord, for thy prophet's calm commanding voice,
For his majestic innocence and truth,
For his unswerving purity of choice,
For all his tender wrath and plenteous ruth ;

For his obedient, wise, clear-listening care
To hear for us what word The Word would say,
For all the trembling fervency of prayer
With which he led our souls the prayerful way ;

For all the heavenly glory of his face
That caught the white Transfiguration's shine
And cast on us the glimmer of thy grace—
Of all thy men late left, the most divine!—

For all his learning, and the thought of power
That seized thy one Idea everywhere,
Brought the eternal down into the hour,
And taught the dead thy life to claim and share ;

For his humility, dove-clear of guile ;—
The sin denouncing, he, like thy great Paul,
Still claimed of sin the greatest share, the while
Our eyes, love-sharpened, saw him best of all !

For his high victories over sin and fear,
The captive hope his words of truth set free ;
For his abiding memory, holy, dear ;
Last, for his death and hiding now in thee,

We praise, we magnify thee, Lord of him.
Thou hast him still ; he ever was thine own ;
Nor shall our tears prevail the path to dim
That leads where, lowly still, he haunts thy throne.

When thou, O Lord, ascendedst up on high,
Good gifts thou sentest down to cheer thy men :
Lo, he ascends !—we follow with the cry,
Send thou his spirit back with thine again.

A MOOD.

My thoughts are like fire-flies, pulsing in moonlight ;
My heart like a silver cup, full of red wine ;
My soul a pale gleaming horizon, whence soon light
Will flood the gold earth with a torrent divine.

THE CARPENTER.

O LORD, at Joseph's humble bench,
Thy hands did handle saw and plane ;
Thy hammer nails did drive and clench,—
Avoiding knot and humouring grain.

That thou didst seem, thou wast indeed ;
In sport thy tools thou didst not use ;
Nor, helping hind's or fisher's need,
The labourer's hire, too nice, refuse.

Lord, might I be but as a saw,
A plane, a chisel, in thy hand !—
No, Lord ! I take it back in awe—
Such prayer for me is far too grand.

I pray, O Master, let me lie,
As on thy bench the favoured wood ;
Thy saw, thy plane, thy chisel ply,
And work me into something good.

No, no : ambition, holy-high,
Urges for more than both to pray :
Come in, O gracious Force, I cry—
O workman, share my shed of clay.

Then I, at bench, or desk, or oar,
With last or needle, net or pen,
As thou in Nazareth of yore,
Shall do the Father's will again.

THE OLD GARDEN.

I.

I STOOD in an ancient garden
With high red walls around ;
Over them grey and green lichens
In shadowy arabesque wound.

The topmost climbing blossoms
On fields kine-haunted looked out ;
But within were shelter and shadow,
And daintiest odours about.

There were alleys and lurking arbours—
Deep glooms into which to dive
The lawns were as soft as fleeces—
Of daisies I counted but five.

The sun-dial was so aged

It had gathered a thoughtful grace ;
And the round-about of the shadow
Seemed to have furrowed its face.

The flowers were all of the oldest

That ever in garden sprung ;
Red, and blood-red, and dark purple,
The rose-lamps flaming hung.

Along the borders fringed

With broad thick edges of box,
Stood fox-gloves and gorgeous poppies,
And great-eyed hollyhocks.

There were junipers trimmed into castles,

And ash-trees bowed into tents ;
For the garden, though ancient and pensive,
Still wore quaint ornaments.

It was all so stately fantastic,
 Its old wind hardly would stir :
Young Spring, when she merrily entered,
 Must feel it no place for her.

II.

I stood in the summer morning
 Under a cavernous yew ;
The sun was gently climbing,
 And the scents rose after the dew.

I saw the wise old mansion,
 Like a cow in the noonday-heat,
Stand in a lake of shadows
 That rippled about its feet.

Its windows were oriel and latticed,
 Lowly and wide and fair ;
And its chimneys like clustered pillars
 Stood up in the thin blue air.

White doves, like the thoughts of a lady,
 Haunted it in and out ;
With a train of green and blue comets,
 The peacock went marching about.

The birds in the trees were singing
 A song as old as the world,
Of love and green leaves and sunshine,
 And winter folded and furred.

They sang that never was sadness
 But it melted and passed away ;
They sang that never was darkness
 But in came the conquering day.

And I knew that a maiden somewhere,
 In a sober sunlit gloom,
In a nimbus of shining garments,
 An aureole of white-browed bloom,

Looked out on the garden dreamy,
And knew not that it was old ;
Looked past the gray and the sombre,
And saw but the green and the gold.

III.

I stood in the gathering twilight,
In a gently blowing wind ;
And the house looked half uneasy,
Like one that was left behind.

The roses had lost their redness,
And cold the grass had grown ;
At roost were the pigeons and peacock,
And the dial was dead gray stone.

The world by the gathering twilight
In a gauzy dusk was clad ;
It went in through my eyes to my spirit,
And made me a little sad.

Grew and gathered the twilight,
And filled my heart and brain ;
The sadness grew more than sadness,
And turned to a gentle pain.

Browned and brooded the twilight,
And sank down through the calm,
Till it seemed for some human sorrows
There could not be any balm.

IV.

Then I knew that up a staircase,
Which untrod will yet creak and shake,
Deep in a distant chamber,
A ghost was coming awake.

In the growing darkness growing—
Growing till her eyes appear,
Like spots of a deeper twilight,
But more transparent clear—

Thin as hot air up-trembling,
Thin as sun-molten crape,
The deepening shadow of something
Taketh a certain shape ;

A shape whose hands are unlifted
To throw back her blinding hair ;
A shape whose bosom is heaving,
But draws not in the air.

And I know, by what time the moonlight
On her nest of shadows will sit,
Out on the dim lawn gliding
That shadow of shadows will flit.

v.

The moon is dreaming upward
From a sea of cloud and gleam ;
She looks as if she had seen us
Never but in a dream.

Down that stair I know she is coming,
Bare-footed, lifting her train ;
It creaks not—she hears it creaking,
For the sound is in her brain.

Out at the side-door she's coming,
With a timid glance right and left ;
Her look is hopeless yet eager,
The look of a heart bereft.

Across the lawn she is flitting,
Her eddyng robe in the wind,
Are her fair feet bending the grasses ?
Her hair is half lifted behind !

VI.

Shall I stay to look on her nearer ?
Would she start and vanish away ?
Oh, no ! she will never see me,
If I stand as near as I may.

It is not this wind she is feeling,
Not this cool grass below ;
'Tis the wind and the grass of an evening
A hundred years ago.

She sees no roses darkling,
No stately hollyhocks dim ;
She is only thinking and dreaming
Of the garden, the night, and him ;

Of the unlit windows behind her,
Of the timeless dial-stone,
Of the trees, and the moon, and the shadows,
A hundred years ago.

'Tis a night for all ghostly lovers
To haunt the best-loved spot :
Is he come in his dreams to this garden ?
I gaze, but I see him not.

VII.

I will not look on her nearer—

My heart would be torn in twain ;
From mine eyes the garden would vanish
In the falling of their rain.

I will not look on a sorrow

That darkens into despair ;
On the surge of a heart that cannot—
Yet cannot cease to bear.

My soul to hers would be calling—

She would hear no word it said ;
If I cried aloud in the stillness
She would never turn her head.

She is dreaming the sky above her,

She is dreaming the earth below :—
This night she lost her lover
A hundred years ago.

A NOONDAY MELODY.

EVERYTHING goes to its rest ;

The hills are asleep in the noon ;

And life is as still in its nest

As the moon when she looks on a moon

In the depth of a calm river's breast

As it steals through a midnight in June.

The streams have forgotten the sea

In the dream of their musical sound ;

The sunlight is thick on the tree,

And the shadows lie warm on the ground,—

So still, you may watch them and see

Every breath that awakens around.

The churchyard lies still in the heat,

With its handful of mouldering bone,

As still as the long stalk of wheat
In the shadow that sits by the stone,
As still as the grass at my feet
When I walk in the meadows alone.

The waves are asleep on the main,
And the ships are asleep on the wave ;
And the thoughts are as still in my brain
As the echo that sleeps in the cave ;
All rest from their labour and pain—
Then why should not I in my grave ?

WHO LIGHTS THE FIRE ?

WHO lights the fire—that forth so gracefully

And freely frolicketh the fairy smoke?

Some pretty one who never felt the yoke—

Glad girl, or maiden more sedate than she.

Pedant it cannot, villain cannot be !

Some Genius, may-be, his own symbol woke ;

But Puritan, nor rogue in virtue's cloke,

Nor kitchen-maid has done it certainly !

Ha, ha ! you cannot find the lighter out

For all the blue smoke's pantomimic gesture—

His name or nature, sex or age or vesture !

The fire was lit by human care, no doubt—

But now the smoke is Nature's tributary,

Dancing 'twixt man and nothing like a fairy.

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT ?

WHO would have thought that even an idle song
Were such a holy and celestial thing
That wickedness and envy cannot sing—
That music for no moment lives with wrong ?
I know this, for a very grievous throng,
Dark thoughts, low wishes, round my bosom
cling,
And, underneath, the hidden holy spring
Stagnates because of their enchantment strong.

Blow, breath of heaven, on all this poison blow !
And, heart, glow upward to this gracious breath !
Between them, vanish, mist of sin and death,
And let the life of life within me flow !
Love is the green earth, the celestial air,
And music runs like dews and rivers there !

ON A DECEMBER DAY.

THIS is the sweetness of an April day ;
The softness of the spring is on the face
Of the old year. She has no natural grace,
But something comes to her from far away
Out of the Past, and on her old decay
The beauty of her childhood you can trace.—
And yet she moveth with a stormy pace,
And goeth quickly.—Stay, old year, oh, stay !

We do not like new friends, we love the old ;
With young, fierce, hopeful hearts we ill agree ;
But thou art patient, stagnant, calm, and cold,
And not like that new year that is to be ;—
Life, promise, love, her eyes may fill, fair child !
We know the past, and will not be beguiled.

II.

Yet the free heart will not be captive long ;
And if she changes often, she is free
But if she changes : One has mastery
Who makes the joy the last in every song.
And so to-day I blessed the breezes strong
That swept the blue ; I blessed the breezes free
That rolled wet leaves like rivers shiningly ;
I blessed the purple woods I stood among.

“ And yet the spring is better ! ” Bitterness
Came with the words, but did not stay with them.
“ Accomplishment and promise ! field and stem
“ New green fresh growing in a fragrant dress !
“ And we behind with death and memory ! ”
—Nay, prophet-spring ! but I will follow thee.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1850.

BEAUTIFUL stories wed with lovely days

Like words and music :—what shall be the tale

Of love and nobleness that might avail

To express in action what this sweetness says—

The sweetness of a day of airs and rays

That are strange glories on the winter pale ?

Alas, O beauty, all my fancies fail !

I cannot tell a story in thy praise !

Thou hast, thou hast one—set, and sure to chime

With thee, as with the days of “winter wild ;”

For Joy like Sorrow loves his blessed feet

Who shone from Heaven on Earth this Christ-
mas-time,

A Brother and a Saviour, Mary's child !—

And so, fair day, thou *hast* thy story sweet.

TO A FEBRUARY PRIMROSE.

I KNOW not what among the grass thou art,
Thy nature, nor thy substance, fairest flower,
Nor what to other eyes thou hast of power
To send thine image through them to the heart ;
But when I push the frosty leaves apart,
And see thee hiding in thy wintry bower,
Thou growest up within me from that hour,
And through the snow I with the spring depart.

I have no words. But fragrant is the breath,
Pale beauty, of thy second life within.
There is a wind that cometh for thy death,
But thou a life immortal dost begin,
Where in one soul, which is thy heaven, shall
dwell
Thy spirit, beautiful Unspeakable !

IN FEBRUARY.

Now in the dark of February rains,

Poor lovers of the sunshine, spring is born

The earthy fields are full of hidden corn,

And March's violets bud along the lanes ;

Therefore with joy believe in what remains.

And thou who dost not feel them, do not scorn

Our early songs for winter overworn,

And faith in God's handwriting on the plains.

“ Hope ” writes he, “ Love ” in the first violet,

“ Joy,” even from Heaven, in songs and winds

and trees ;

And having caught the happy words in these

While Nature labours with the letters yet,

Spring cannot cheat us, though *her* hopes be broken,

Nor leave us, for we know what God hath spoken.

THE TRUE.

I ENVY the tree-tops that shake so high
In winds that fill them full of heavenly airs ;
I envy every little cloud that shares
With unseen angels evening in the sky ;
I envy most the youngest stars that lie
Sky-nested, and the loving heaven that bears,
And night that makes strong worlds of them
unawares ;
And all God's other beautiful and nigh !

Nay ! nay, I envy not ! And these are dreams,
Fancies and images of real heaven !
My longings, all my longing prayers are given
For that which is, and not for that which seems.
Draw me, O Lord, to thy true heaven above,
The Heaven of thy Thought, thy Rest, thy Love.

THE DWELLERS THEREIN.

DOWN a warm alley, early in the year,
Among the woods, with all the sunshine in
And all the winds outside it, I begin
To think that something gracious will appear,
If anything of grace inhabit here,
Or there be friendship in the woods to win.
Might one but find companions more akin
To trees and grass and happy daylight clear,
And in this wood spend one long hour at home !
The fairies do not love so bright a place,
And angels to the forest never come ;
But I have dreamed of some harmonious race,
The kindred of the shapes that haunt the shore
Of Music's flow and flow for evermore.

AUTUMN'S GOLD.

ALONG the tops of all the yellow trees,
The golden-yellow trees, the sunshine lies ;
And where the leaves are gone, long rays surprise
Lone depths of thicket with their brightnesses ;
And through the woods, all waste of many a breeze,
Cometh more joy of light for Poet's eyes—
Green fields lying yellow underneath the skies,
And shining houses and blue distances.

By the roadside, like rocks of golden ore
That make the western river-beds so bright,
The briar and the furze are all alight !
Perhaps the year will be so fair no more,
But now the fallen, falling leaves are gay,
And autumn old has shone into a Day !

PUNISHMENT.

MOURNER, that dost deserve thy mournfulness,

Call thyself punished, call the earth thy hell ;

Say, " God is angry, and I earned it well—

" I would not have him smile on wickedness : "

Say this, and straightway all thy grief grows less :—

" God rules at least, I find, as prophets tell,

" And proves it in this prison ! "—then thy cell

Smiles with an unsuspected loveliness.

—" A prison—and yet from door and window-bar

" I catch a thousand breaths of his sweet air !

" Even to me his days and nights are fair !

" He shows me many a flower and many a star !

" And though I mourn and he is very far,

" He does not kill the hope that reaches there ! "

SHEW US THE FATHER.

“SHEW us the Father.” Chiming stars of space,
And lives that fit the worlds, and means and
powers,

A Thought that holds them up reveal to ours—
A Wisdom we have been made wise to trace.

And, looking out from sweetest Nature's face,
From sunsets, moonlights, rivers, hills, and
flowers,

Infinite love and beauty, all the hours,
Woo men that love them with divinest grace ;
And to the depths of all the answering soul

High Justice speaks, and calls the world her own ;
And yet we long, and yet we have not known
The very Father's face who means the whole !

Shew us the Father ! Nature, conscience, love
Revealed in beauty, is there One above ?

THE PINAFORE.

WHEN peevish flaws his soul have stirred
To fretful tears for crossed desires,
Obedient to his mother's word,
My child to banishment retires.

As disappears the moon, when wind
Heaps miles of mist her visage o'er,
So vanisheth his face behind
The cloud of his white pinafore.

I cannot then come near my child—
A gulf between of gainful loss ;
He to the infinite exiled—
I waiting, for I cannot cross.

Ah then, what wonder, passing show,
The Isis-veil behind it brings—
Like that self-coffined creatures know,
Remembering legs, foreseeing wings !

Mysterious moment ! When or how
Is the bewildering change begun ?
Hid in far deeps the awful *now*
When turns his being to the sun !

A light goes up behind his eyes,
A still small voice behind his ears ;
A listing wind about him sighs,
And lo the inner landscape clears !

Hid by that screen, a wondrous shine
Is gathering for a sweet surprise ;
As Moses grew, in dark divine,
Too radiant for his people's eyes.

For when the garment sinks again,
 Outbeams a brow of heavenly wile,
Clear as a morning after rain,
 And sunny with a perfect smile.

Oh, would that I the secret knew
 Of hiding from my evil part,
And turning to the lovely true
 The open windows of my heart !

Lord, in thy skirt, love's tender gaol,
 Hide thou my selfish heart's disgrace ;
Fill me with light, and then unveil
 To friend and foe a friendly face.

THE PRISM.

I.

A POOL of broken sunbeams lay
Upon the passage-floor,
Radiant and rich, profound and gay,
As ever diamond bore.

Small, flitting hands a handkerchief
Spread like a cunning trap :
Prone lay the gorgeous jewel-sheaf
In the glory-gleaner's lap !

Deftly she folded up the prize,
With lovely avarice ;
Like one whom *having* had made wise,
She bore it off in bliss.

But ah, when for her prisoned gems
 She peeped, to prove them there,
No glories broken from their stems
 Lay in the kerchief bare !

For still, outside the nursery door,
 The bright persistency,
A molten diadem on the floor,
 Lay burning wondrously.

II.

How oft have I laid fold from fold,
 And peered into my mind—
To see of all the purple and gold
 Not one gleam left behind !

The best of gifts will not be stored :
 The manna of yesterday

Has filled no sacred miser-hoard
To keep new need away.

Thy grace, O Lord, it is thyself ;
Thy presence is thy light ;
I cannot lay it on my shelf,
Or take it from thy sight.

For daily bread we daily pray—
The want still breeds the cry ;
And so we meet, day after day.
Thou, Father in heaven, and I.

Is my house dreary—wall and floor?
Will not the darkness flit ?
I go outside my shadowy door,
And in thy rainbow sit.

SLEEP.

OH, is it Death that comes
To have a foretaste of the whole ?
To-night the planets and the stars
Will glimmer through my window-bars,
But will not shine upon my soul.

For I shall lie as dead,
Though yet I am above the ground ;
All passionless, with scarce a breath,
With hands of rest and eyes of death,
I shall be carried swiftly round.

Or if my life should break
The idle night with doubtful gleams,
Through mossy arches will I go,

Through arches ruinous and low,
And chase the true and false in dreams.

Why should I fall asleep?
When I am still upon my bed,
The moon will shine, the winds will rise,
And all around and through the skies
The light clouds travel o'er my head.

O busy, busy things !
Ye mock me with your ceaseless life ;
For all the hidden springs will flow,
And all, the blades of grass will grow,
When I have neither peace nor strife.

And all the long night through,
The restless streams will hurry by ;
And round the lands, with endless roar,
The white waves fall upon the shore,
And bit by bit devour the dry.

Even thus, but silently,
Eternity, thy tide shall flow,—
And side by side with every star
Thy long-drawn swell shall bear me far,
An idle boat with none to row.

My senses fail with sleep ;
My heart beats thick ; the night is noon ;
And faintly through its misty folds
I hear a drowsy clock that holds
Its converse with the waning moon.

Oh, solemn mystery !
That I should be so closely bound
With neither terror nor constraint,
Without a murmur of complaint,
And lose myself upon such ground !

SHARING.

ON the far horizon there
Heaps of cloudy darkness rest ;
Though the wind is in the air,
There is stupor east and west.

For the sky no change is making ;
Scarce we know it from the plain ;
Droop its eyelids never waking,
Blinded by the misty rain ;

Save on high one little spot,
Round the baffled moon a space,
Where the tumult ceaseth not :
Wildly goes the midnight race !

And a joy doth rise in me
Upward gazing on the sight,
When I think that others see
In yon clouds a like delight.

How perchance an aged man,
Struggling with the wind and rain,
In the moonlight cold and wan
Feels his heart grow young again

As the cloudy rack goes by !
How the life-blood mantles up,
Till the fountain deep and dry
Yields once more a sparkling cup !

Or upon the gazing child
Cometh down a thought of glory
Which will keep him undefiled
Till his head is old and hoary.

For it may be he hath woke
And hath raised his fair young form ;
Strangely on his eyes have broke
All the splendours of the storm !

And his young soul forth doth leap
With the storm-clouds in the moon !
And his heart the light will keep
Though the vision passeth soon.

Thus a joy hath often laughed
On my soul from other skies,
Bearing on its wings a draught
From the wells of Paradise ;

For that not to me alone
Comes a splendour out of fear :
Where the light of heaven hath shone
There is glory far and near !

IN BONDS.

OF the poor bird that cannot fly
Kindly you think and mournfully ;
For prisoners and for exiles all
You let the tears of pity fall ;
And very true the grief should be
That mourns the bondage of the free.

The soul—*she* has a fatherland ;
Binds *her* not many a tyrant's hand ?
And the winged spirit has a home,
But can she always homeward come ?
Poor souls, with all their wounds and foes,
Will you not also pity those ?

HUNGER.

FATHER, I cry to thee for bread
With hungred longing, eager prayer ;
Thou hear'st, and givest me instead
More hunger and a half despair.

O Lord ! how long ? My days decline,
My youth is lapped in memories old ;
I need not bread alone, but wine—
See, cup and hand to thee I hold.

And yet thou givest : thanks, O Lord,
That still my heart with hunger faints !
The day will come when at thy board
I sit, forgetting all my plaints.

If rain must come and winds must blow,
And I pore long o'er dim-seen chart,
Yet, Lord, let not the hunger go,
And keep the faintness at my heart.

METHOUGHT that in a solemn church I stood.
Its marble acres, worn with knees and feet,
Lay spread from door to door, from street to street.
Midway the form hung high upon the rood
Of him who gave his life to be our good ;
Beyond, priests flitted, bowed, and murmured meet,
Among the candles shining still and sweet.
Men came and went, and worshipped as they could—
And still their dust a woman with her broom,
Bowed to her work, kept sweeping to the door.
Then saw I, slow through all the pillared gloom,
Across the church a silent figure come :
“ Daughter,” it said, “ thou sweepest well my floor ! ”
It is the Lord ! I cried, and saw no more.

GODLY BALLANTS.

I.—THIS SIDE AN' THAT.

THE rich man sat in his father's seat—

Purple an' linen, an' a'thing fine !

The puir man lay at his gate i' the street—

Sairs an' tatters, an' weary pine !

To the rich man's table ilk dainty comes ;

Mony a morsel gaed frae 't, or fell ;

The puir man fain wad hae dined on the crumbs,

But whether he got them I canna tell.

Servants prood, saft-fittit, an' stoot,

Stan' by the rich man's curtained doors ;

Maisterless dogs 'at rin about
 Cam to the puir man an' lickit his sores.

The rich man dee'd, an' they buried him gran' ;
 In linen fine his body they wrap ;
 But the angels tuik up the beggar man,
 An' laid him doon in Abraham's lap.

The guid upo' this side, the ill upo' that—
 Sic was the rich man's waesome fa' !
 But his brithers they eat, an' they drink, an' they
 chat,
 An' carena a strae for their father's ha'.

The trowth's the trowth, think what ye will ;
 An' some they kenna what they wad be at ;
 But the beggar man thought he did no that ill,
 Wi' the dogs o' this side, the angels o' that.

II.—THE TWA BAUBEES.

Stately, lang-robit, an' steppin' at ease,
The rich men gaed up the temple ha' ;
Hasty, an' grippin' her twa baubees,
The widow cam efter, booed an' sma'.

Their goud rang lood as it fell, an' lay
Yallow an' glintin', bonnie an' braw ;
But the fowk roon' the Maister h'ard him say
The puir body's baubees was mair nor it a'.

III.—WHA'S MY NEIBOUR ?

Doon frae Jerusalem a traveller took
The laigh road to Jericho ;
It had an ill name an' mony a crook,
It was lang an' unco how.

Oot cam the robbers, an' fell on the man,
An' knockit him on the heid,

Took a' whauron they could lay their han',
An' left him nakit for deid.

By cam a minister o' the kirk :
" A sair mishanter ! " he cried ;
" Wha kens whaur the villains may lirk !
" I s' haud to the ither side."

By cam an elder o' the kirk ;
Like a yoong horse he shied :
" Fie ! there's a bonny mornin's wark ! "
An' he spangt to the ither side.

By cam ane gaed to the wrang kirk ;
Douce he trottit alang.
" Puir body ! " he cried, an' wi' a yerker
Aff o' his cuddy he sprang.

He ran to the boady, an' turned it ower :
" There's life i' the man ! " he cried.

He wasna ane to stan' an' glower,
Nor haud to the ither side!

He doctored his wounds, an' heised him on
To the back o' the beastie douce ;
An' heild him on till, a weary man,
He langt at the half-way hoose.

He ten'd him a' nicht, an' at dawn o' day :
“Lan'lord, latna him lack ;
“Here's auchteen pence !—an' ony mair ootlay,
“I'll saddle 't as I come back.”

Sae tak til ye, neibours ; ye hear the word—
It's a true bit o' God's ain spell ;
“Wha is my neibour ?” speirna the Lord ;
But, “Am I a neibour ?” yersel.

IV.—HIM WI' THE BAG.

Ance was a woman whase hert was gret ;

Her love was sae dumb it was 'maist a grief ;

She brak the box—it's tellt o' her yet—

The bonny box for her hert's relief.

Ane was there whase tale's but brief,

Yet was ower lang, the gait he cawed ;

He luikit a man, and was but a thief,

Michty the gear to grip and haud.

“What guid,” he cried, “sic a boxfu' to blaud ?

Wilfu' waste I canna beir ;

It micht hae been sellt for ten poun', I wad—

Sellt for ten poun', and gi'en to the puir !”

Savin' he was, but for love o' the gear ;

Carefu' he was, but a' for himsel' ;

He carried the bag to his hert sae near,

What fell i' the ane i' the ither fell.

And the strings o' his hert hang doon to hell—

They war pu'd sae ticht aboot the moo' ;

And hence it comes that I hae to tell

The warst ill tale that ever was true.

The hert that's greedy maun mischief brew,

And the deils pu'd the strings doon yon'er in hell ;

And he sauld, er' the agein' mune was new,

For thirty shillins the Maister himsel' !

Gear i' the hert it's a canker fell—

Brithers, latna the siller ben ;

Troth, gien ye du, I warn ye, ye'll sell

The verra Maister er' ever ye ken !

V.—THE COORSE CRATUR.

The Lord gaed wi' a crood o' men

Throu Jericho the bonny ;

'Twas ill the Son o' Man to ken

Mang sons o' men sae mony :

The wee bit son o' man Zacchay
To see the Maister seekit ;
He speilt a fig-tree, bauld an' shy,
An' sae his shortness ekit.

But as he thought to see his back,
Roon' turnt the haill face til 'im,
Up luikit straucht, an' til 'im spak—
His hert gaed like to kill 'im.

“ Come doon, Zacchay ; bestir yersel’ ;
“ This nicht I want a lodgin’.”
Like a ripe apple doon he fell,
Nor needit ony nudgin’.

But up amang the unco guid
There rase a murmurin’ won’er :
“ This is an unco want o’ heed !
“ The man’s a special sinner ! ”

Up spak Zacchay, his hert a bleeze,
“ Lord, half I hae, the puir they hae it ;
“ Whate’er I got by tellin’ lees,
“ Fourfauld for honesty I pay it.”

Then Jesus said unto the man,
“ This day here comes salvation ;
“ For this is ane o’ Abraham’s clan,”
—Wha soucht the true fundation.

“ I cam the lost to seek an’ win.”
—Sae here was ane he wantit !
And to the man that left his sin
He grace nor glory scantit.

TO THE CLOUDS.

THROUGH the unchanging heaven, as ye have sped,
Speed onward still, a strange wild company,
Fleet children of the waters ! Glorious ye,
Whether the sun lift up his shining head,
High throned at noontide and established
Among the shifting pillars, or we see
The sable ghosts of air sleep mournfully
Against the sunlight, passionless and dead !
Take thus a glory, oh thou higher Sun,
From all the cloudy labour of man's hand—
Whether the quickening nations rise and run,
Or in the market-place we idly stand
Casting huge shadows over these thy plains—
Even thence, O God, draw thy rich gifts of rains.

NEW YEAR'S EVE : A WAKING DREAM.

I HAVE not any fearful tale to tell
Of fabled giant or of dragon-claw,
Or bloody deed to pilfer and to sell
To those who feed with such a gaping maw ;
But what in yonder hamlet there befell,
Or rather what in it my fancy saw
I will declare, albeit it may seem
Too simple and too common for a dream.

Two brothers were they, and they sat alone
Without a word, beside the winter's glow ;
For it was many years since they had known
The love that bindeth brothers, till the snow

Of age had frozen it, and it had grown
An icy-withered stream that would not flow ;
And so they sat with warmth about their feet
And ice about their hearts that would not beat.

And yet it was a night for quiet hope :—
A night the very last of all the year
To many a youthful heart did seem to ope
An eye within the future, round and clear ;
And age itself, that travels down the slope,
Sat glad and waiting as the hour drew near,
The dreamy hour that hath the heaviest chime,
Jerking our souls into the coming time.

But they !—alas for age when it is old !
The silly calendar they did not heed ;
Alas for age when in its bosom cold
There is not warmth to nurse a bladed weed !
They thought not of the morrow, but did hold
A quiet sitting as their hearts did feed

Inwardly on themselves, as still and mute
As if they were a-cold from head to foot.

O solemn kindly night, she looketh still
With all her moon upon us now and then !
And though she dwelleth most in craggy hill,
She hath an eye unto the hearts of men !
So past a corner of the window-sill
She thrust a long bright finger just as ten
Had struck, and on the dial plate it came,
Healing each hour's raw edge with tender flame.

There is a something in the winds of heaven
That stirreth purposely and maketh men ;
And unto every little wind is given
A thing to do ere it is still again ;
So when the little clock had struck eleven,
The edging moon had drawn her silver pen
Across a mirror, making them aware
Of something ghostlier than their own grey hair.

Therefore they drew aside the window-blind
And looked upon the sleeping town below,
And on the little church which sat behind,
As keeping watch upon the scanty row
Of steady tombstones—some of which inclined,
And others upright, in the moon did show
Like to a village down below the waves—
It was so still and cool among the graves.

But not a word from either mouth did fall,
Except it were some very plain remark.
Ah, why should such as they be glad at all?
For years they had not listened to the lark !
The child was dead in them !—yet did there crawl
A wish about their hearts ; and as the bark
Of distant sheep-dog came, they were aware
Of a strange longing for the open air.

Ah, many an earthy-weaving year had spun
A web of heavy cloud about their brain !

And many a sun and moon had come and gone
Since they walked arm in arm, these brothers twain !
But now with timed pace their feet did stun
The village echoes into quiet pain :
The street appeared very short and white,
And they like ghosts unquiet for the light.

“ Right through the churchyard,” one of them
did say

—I knew not which was elder of the two—

“ Right through the churchyard is our better way.”

“ Ay,” said the other, “ past the scrubby yew.

“ I have not seen her grave for many a day ;

And it is in me that with moonlight too

It might be pleasant thinking of old faces,

And yet I seldom go into such places.”

Strange, strange indeed to me the moonlight wan

Sitting about a solitary stone,

Stranger than many tales it is to scan

The earthy fragment of a human bone,

But stranger still to see a grey old man
Apart from all his fellows and alone
With the pale night and all its giant quiet ;
Therefore that stone was strange and those two
by it.

It was their mother's grave, and here were hid
The priceless pulses of a mother's soul.
Full sixty years it was since she had slid
Into the other world through that deep hole.
But as they stood it seemed the coffin lid
Grew deaf with sudden hammers !—'twas the mole
Niddering about its roots.—Be still, old men,
Be very still and ye will hear again.

Ay, ye will hear it ! Ye may go away,
But it will stay with you till ye are dead !
It is but earthy mould and quiet clay,
But it hath power to turn the oldest head :
Their eyes met in the moon, and they did say
More than a hundred tongues had ever said.

So they passed onwards through the rapping wicket
Into the centre of a firry thicket.

It was a solemn meeting of Earth's life,
An inquest held upon the death of things ;
And in the naked north full thick and rife
The snow-clouds too were meeting as on wings
Shorn round the edges by the frost's keen knife ;
And the trees seemed to gather into rings,
Waiting to be made blind, as they did quail
Among their own wan shadows thin and pale.

Many strange noises are there among trees,
And most within the quiet moony light,
Therefore those aged men are on their knees
As if they listened somewhat :—Ye are right—
Upwards it bubbles like the hum of bees !
Although ye never heard it till to-night
The mighty mother calleth ever so
To all her pale-eyed children from below.

Ay, ye have walked upon her paven ways,
And heard her voices in the market place,
But ye have never listened what she says
When the snow-moon is pressing on her face !
One night like this is more than many days
To him who hears the music and the bass
Of deep immortal lullabies which calm
His troubled soul as with a hushing psalm.

I know not whether there is power in sleep
To dim the eyelids of the shining moon,
But so it seemed then, for still more deep
She grew into a heavy cloud, which soon
Hiding her outmost edges, seemed to keep
A pressure on her ; so there came a swoon
Among the shadows, which still lay together
But in their slumber knew not one another.

But while the midnight groped for the chime,
As she were heavy with excess of dreams,

She from the cloud's thick web a second time
Made many shadows, though with minished beams ;
And as she looked eastward through the rime
Of a thin vapour got of frosty steams,
There fell a little snow upon the crown
Of a near hillock very bald and brown.

And on its top they found a little spring,
A very helpful little spring indeed,
Which evermore unwound a tiny string
Of earnest water with continual speed—
And so the brothers stood and heard it sing ;
For all was snowy-still, and not a seed
Had struck, and nothing came but noises light
Of the continual whitening of the night.

There is a kindness in the falling snow—
It is a grey head to the spring time mild ;
So as the creamy vapour bowed low,
Crowning the earth with honour undefiled,

Within each withered man arose a glow
As if he fain would turn into a child :
There was a gladness somewhere in the ground
Which in his bosom nowhere could be found.

Not through the purple summer, or the blush
Of red voluptuous roses, did it come,
That silent speaking voice, but through the slush
And snowy quiet of the winter numb !
It was a barren mound that heard the gush
Of living water from two fountains dumb—
Two rocky human hearts which long had striven
To make a pleasant noise beneath high heaven !

Now from the village came the onward shout
Of lightsome voices and of merry cheer ;
It was a youthful group that wandered out
To do obeisance to the glad new year ;
And as they passed they sang with voices stout
A song which I was very fain to hear,

But as they darkened on, away it died,
And the two men walked homewards side by side.

TO MY FRIENDS.

MOURN not, my friends, that we are growing old:
A fresher birth brings every new year in.
Years are Christ's napkins to wipe off the sin.
See now, I'll be to you an angel bold !
My plumes are ruffled, and they shake with cold,
Yet with a trumpet-blast I will begin.
—Ah, no ; your listening ears not thus I win !
Yet hear, sweet sisters ; brothers, be consoled :—
Behind me comes a shining one indeed ;
Christ's friend, who from life's cross did take him
 down,
And set upon his day night's starry crown !
Death, say'st thou ? Nay—thine be no caitiff
 creed !—
A woman-angel ! see—in long white gown !
The mother of our youth !—she maketh speed.

FROM NORTH WALES : TO THE MOTHER.

WHEN the summer gave us a longer day,
And the leaves were thickest, I went away :
Like an isle, through dark clouds, of the infinite
 blue,
Was that summer-ramble from London and you.

It was but one burst into life and air,
One backward glance on the skirts of care,
A height on the hills with the smoke below—
And the joy that came quickly was quick to go.

But I know and I cannot forget so soon
How the Earth is shone on by Sun and Moon ;
How the clouds hide the mountains, and how
 they move
When the morning sunshine lies warm above.

I know how the waters fall and run
In the rocks and the heather, away from the sun ;
How they hang like garlands on all hill-sides,
And are the land's music, those crystal tides.

I know how they gather in valleys fair,
Meet valleys those beautiful waves to bear ;
How they dance through the rocks, how they rest
 in the pool,
How they darken, how sparkle, and how they are
 cool.

I know how the rocks from their kisses climb
To keep the storms off with a front sublime ;
And how on their platforms and sloping walls
The shadow of oak-tree and fir-tree falls.

I know how the valleys are bright from far,
Rocks, meadows, and waters, the wood and the scaur;
And how the roadside and the nearest hill
The foxglove and heather and harebell fill.

I know—but the joy that was quick to go
Gave more knowledge to me than words can
shew ;
And *you* know the story, and how they fare
Who love the green earth and the heavenly air.

THE stars are steady abune ;
I' the water they flichter an' flee ;
But steady aye luikin' doon,
They ken themsel's i' the sea.

A' licht, an' clear, an' free,
God, thou shonest abune ;
Yet luik, an' see thysel' in me,
God, whan thou luikest doon.

COME TO ME.

COME to me, come to me, O my God ;

Come to me everywhere !

Let the trees mean thee, and the grassy sod,

And the water and the air !

For thou art so far that I often doubt,

As on every side I stare,

Searching within, and looking without,

If thou art anywhere.

How did men find thee in days of old ?

How did they grow so sure ?

They fought in thy name, they were glad and bold,

They suffered, and kept themselves pure !

But now they say—neither above the sphere,
Nor down in the heart of man,
But only in fancy, ambition, or fear,
The thought of thee began.

If only that perfect tale were true
Which, with touch of sunny gold,
Of the ancient many makes one anew,
And simplicity manifold !

But *he* said that they who did his word
The truth of it should know :
I will try to do it—if he be lord,
Perhaps the old spring will flow ;

Perhaps the old spirit-wind will blow
That he promised to their prayer ;
And doing thy will, I yet shall know
Thee, father, everywhere !

A FEAR.

O MOTHER earth, I have a fear
Which I would tell to thee—
Softly and gently in thine ear
When the moon and we are three.

Thy grass and flowers are beautiful ;
Among thy trees I hide ;
And underneath the moonlight cool
Thy sea looks broad and wide ;

But this I fear—lest thou shouldst grow
To me so small and strange,
So distant, I should never know
On thee a shade of change,

Although great earthquakes should uplift
Deep mountains from their base,
And thy continual motion shift
The lands upon thy face.

The grass, the flowers, the dews that lie
Upon them as before—
Driven upwards evermore, lest I
Should love these things no more.

Even now thou dimly hast a place
In deep star galaxies !
And I, driven ever on through space,
Have lost thee in the skies !

THE LOST HOUSE.

OUT of my door I run to do the thing

That calls upon me. Straight the wind of words
Whoops from mine ears the sounds of them that sing
About their work—"My God, my father-king!"

I turn in haste to see thy blessed door,

But lo a cloud of flies and bats and birds,
And stalking vapours, and vague monster herds,
Have risen and lighted, rushed and swollen
between !

Ah me ! the house of peace is there no more.

Was it a dream then?—Walls, fireside, and floor,
And sweet obedience, loving, calm, and free,
Are vanished—gone as they had never been !

I labour groaning. Comes a sudden sheen !—
And I am kneeling at my father's knee,
Sighing with joy, and hoping utterly.

THE TALK OF THE ECHOES.

A FRAGMENT.

WHEN the cock crows loud from the glen,
And the moor-cock chirrs from the heather,
What hear ye and see ye then,
Ye children of air and ether?

1st Echo. A thunder as of waves at the rising of
the moon,
And a darkness on the graves though
the day is at its noon.

2nd Echo. A springing as of grass though the air
is damp and chill,
And a glimmer from the river that
winds about the hill.

1st Echo. A lapse of crags that leant from the
 mountain's earthen sheath,
And a shock of ruin sent on the river
 underneath.

2nd Echo. A sound as of a building that groweth
 fair and good,
And a piping of the thrushes from the
 hollow of the wood.

1st Echo. A wailing as of lambs that have wand-
 ered from the flock,
And a bleating of their dams that was
 answered from the rock.

2nd Echo. A breathing as of cattle in the shadow
 where they dream,
And a sound of children playing with
 the pebbles in the stream.

1st Echo. A driving as of clouds in the kingdom
of the air,
And a tumult as of crowds that mingle
everywhere.

2nd Echo. A waving of the grass, and a passing
o'er the lakes,
And a shred of tempest-cloud in the
glory when it breaks.

IN God alone, the perfect end,
Wilt thou find thyself or friend

THE HEALER.

THEY come to thee, the halt, the maimed, the blind,
The devil-torn, the sick, the sore ;
Thy heart their well of life they find,
Thine ear their open door.

Ah, who can tell the joy in Palestine—
What smiles and tears of rescued throngs !
Their lees of life were turned to wine,
Their prayers to shouts and songs !

The story dear our wise men fable call,
Give paltry facts the mighty range ;
To me it seems just what should fall,
And nothing very strange.

But were I deaf and lame and blind and sore,
I scarce would care for cure to ask ;
Another prayer should haunt thy door—
Set thee a harder task.

If thou art Christ, see here this heart of mine,
Torn, empty, moaning, and unblest !
Had ever heart more need of thine,
If thine indeed hath rest ?

Thy word, thy hand right soon did scare the bane
That in their bodies death did breed ;
If thou canst cure my deeper pain,
Then art thou lord indeed.

OH THAT A WIND.

OH that a wind would call
From the depths of the leafless wood !
Oh that a voice would fall
On the ear of my solitude !
Far away is the sea,
With its sound and its spirit tone ;
Over it white clouds flee ;
But I am alone, alone.

Straight and steady and tall
The trees stand on their feet ;
Fast by the old stone wall
The moss grows green and sweet ;
But my heart is full of fears,
For the sun shines far away ;

And they look in my face through tears,
And the light of a dying day.

My heart was glad last night
As I pressed it with my palm ;
Its throb was airy and light
As it sang some spirit psalm ;
But it died away in my breast
As I wandered forth to-day,—
As a bird sat dead on its nest,
While others sang on the spray.

O weary heart of mine,
Is there ever a Truth for thee?
Will ever a sun outshine
But the sun that shines on me ?
Away, away through the air
The clouds and the leaves are blown ;
And my heart hath need of prayer,
For it sitteth alone, alone.

A VISION OF ST. ELIGIUS.

I.

I SEE thy house, but I am blown about,
A wind-mocked kite, between the earth and sky,
All out of doors—alas ! of thy doors out,
And drenched in dews no summer suns can dry.

For every blast is passion of my own ;
The dews cold sweats of selfish agony ;
Dank vapour steams from memories lying prone ;
And all my soul is but a stifled cry.

II.

Lord, thou dost hold my string, else were I driven
Down to some gulf where I were tossed no more ;

No turmoil telling I was not in heaven ;
No billows raving on a blessed shore.

Thou standest on thy door-sill, calm as day,
And all my throbs and pangs are pulls from
thee ;
Hold fast the string, lest I should break away,
And outer dark and silence swallow me.

III.

No longer fly thy kite, Lord ; draw me home.
Thou pull'st the string through all the distance
bleak ;
Lord, I am nearing thee ; O Lord, I come ;
Thy pulls grow stronger and the wind grows
weak.

In thy remodelling hands thou tak'st thy kite ;
A moment to thy bosom hold'st me fast.
Thou flingest me abroad :—lo ! in thy might,
A strong-winged bird I soar on every blast.

OF THE SON OF MAN.

I. I HONOUR Nature, holding it unjust
To look with jealousy on her designs ;
With every passing year more fast she twines
About my heart ; with her mysterious dust
Claim I a fellowship not less august
Although she works before me and combines
Her changing forms, wherever the sun shines
Spreading a leafy volume on the crust
Of the old world ; and man himself likewise
Is of her making : wherefore then divorce
What God hath joined thus, and rend by force
Spirit away from substance, bursting ties
By which in one great bond of unity
God hath together bound all things that be ?

II. And in these lines my purpose is to show
That He who left the Father, though he came
Not with art-splendour or the earthly flame
Of genius, yet in that he did bestow
His own true loving heart, did cause to grow,
Unseen and buried deep, whate'er we name
The best in human art, without the shame
Of idle sitting in most real woe ;
And that whate'er of Beautiful and Grand
The Earth contains, by him was not despised,
But rather was so deeply realized
In word and deed, though not with artist hand,
That it was either hid or all disguised
From those who were not wise to understand.

III. Art is the bond of weakness, and we find
Therein acknowledgment of failing power :
A man would worship, gazing on a flower—
Onward he passeth, lo his eyes are blind !
The unenlivened form he left behind
Grew up within him only for an hour !

And he will grapple with Nature till the dower
Of strength shall be retreasured in his mind.
And each form-record is a high protest
Of treason done unto the soul of man,
Which, striving upwards, ever is oppress'd
By the old bondage, underneath whose ban
He, failing in his struggle for the best,
Must live in pain upon what food he can.

IV. Moreover, were there perfect harmony
'Twixt soul and Nature, we should never waste
The precious hours in gazing, but should haste
To assimilate her offerings, and we
From high life-elements, as doth the tree,
Should grow to higher ; so what we call Taste
Is a slow living as of roots encased
In the grim chinks of some sterility
Both cramping and withholding. Art is Truth,
But Truthdammed up and frozen, gagged and bound
As is a streamlet icy and uncouth,
Which pebbles hath and channel but no sound :—

Give it again its summer heart of youth,
And it will be a life upon the ground.

v. And Love had not been prisoned in cold stone,
Nor Beauty smeared on the dead canvas so—
Had not their worshipper been forced to go
Questful and restless through the world alone,
Searching but finding not, till on him shone
Back from his own deep heart a chilly glow
As of a frost-nipped sunbeam, or of snow
Under a storm-dodged crescent which hath grown
Wasted to mockery ; and beneath such gleam
His wan conceits have found an utterance,
Which, had they found a true and sunny beam,
Had ripened into real touch and glance—
Nay more, to real deed, the Truth of all,
To some perfection high and personal.

vi. “ But yet the great of soul have ever been
The first to glory in all works of art ;
For from the genius-form would ever dart
A light of inspiration, and a sheen

As of new comings ; and ourselves have seen
Men of stern purpose to whose eyes would start
Sorrow at sight of sorrow though no heart
Did riot underneath that chilly screen ;—
And hence we judge such utterance native to
The human soul—expression highest—best.”
—Nay, it is by such sign they will pursue,
Albeit unknowing, Beauty, without rest ;
And failing in the search, themselves will fling,
Speechless before its shadow, worshipping.

VII. And how shall he whose mission is to bring
The soul to worship at its rightful shrine,
Seeing in Beauty what is most divine,
Give out the mightiest impulse, and thus fling
His soul into the future, scattering
The living seed of wisdom ? Shall there shine
From underneath his hand a matchless line
Of high earth-beauties, till the wide world ring
With the far clang that tells a missioned soul,
Kneeling to homage all about his feet ?

Alas for such a gift were this the whole,
The only bread of life men had to eat !
Lo, I behold them dead about him now,
And him the heart of death for all that brow !

VIII. If *Thou* didst pass by Art, thou didst not scorn
The souls that by such symbol yearned in vain
From Truth and Love true nourishment to gain :
On thy warm breast, so chilly and forlorn
Fell these thy nurslings little more than born,
That thou wast anguished, and there fell a rain
From thy blest eyelids, and in grief and pain
Thou partedst from them yet one night and morn
To find them wholesome food and nourishment
Instead of what their blindness took for such,
Laying thyself a seed in earthen rent
From which outspringing to the willing touch
Riseth for all thy children harvest great,
For which they will all learn to bless thee yet.

IX. Thou sawest Beauty in the streaking cloud
When grief lift up those eyelids ; nor in scorn

Broke ever on thine eyes the purple morn
Along the cedar tops ; to thee aloud
Spake the night-solitude, when hushed and bowed
The earth lay at thy feet stony and worn ;
Loving thou markedest when the lamb unshorn
Was glad before thee, and amongst the crowd
Famished and pent in cities did thine eye
Read strangest glory—though in human art
No record lives to tell us that thy heart
Bowed to its own deep beauty : deeper did lie
The burden of thy mission, even whereby
We know that Beauty liveth where Thou art. [aspire
x. Doubtless thine eyes have watched the sun
From that same Olivet, when back on thee
Flushed upwards after some night-agony
Thy proper Godhead, with a purer fire
Purpling thy Infinite, and in strong desire
Thou satest in the dawn that was to be
Uplifted on our dark perplexity.
Yea in thee lay thy soul, a living lyre,

And each wild beauty smote it, though the sound
Rung to the night-winds oft and desert air ;
Beneath thine eyes the lily paled more fair,
And each still shadow slanting on the ground
Lay sweetly on thee as commissioned there,
So full wast thou of eyes all round and round.

XI. And so thou needed'st not our human skill
To fix what thus were transient—there it grew
Wedded to thy perfection, and anew
With every coming vision rose there still
Some living principle which did fulfil
Thy most legitimate manhood, and unto
Thy soul all Nature rendered up its due
With not a contradiction, and each hill
And mountain torrent, and each wandering light
Grew out divinely on thy countenance,
Whereon, as we are told, by word and glance
Thy hearers read an ever strange delight--
So strange to them thy Truth, they could not tell
What made thy message so unspeakable.

XII. And by such living witness didst thou preach ;
Not with blind hands of groping forward thrust
Into the darkness, gathering only dust,
But by this real sign that thou didst reach
In natural order, rising each from each,
Thy own ideals of the True and Just ;
And that as thou didst live, even so he must
Who would aspire his fellow men to teach,
Looking perpetual from new heights of Thought
On his old self. Of art no scorner thou !
Instead of leafy chaplet on thy brow
Wearing the light of manhood thou hast brought
Death unto Life ! Above all statues now
Immortal Artist hail ! thy work is wrought !

XIII. Solemn and icy stand ye in my eyes
Far up into the niches of the Past,
Ye marble statues, dim and holden fast
Within your stony homes ! nor human cries
Had shook you from your frozen phantasies
Or sent the life-blood through you, till there passed

Through all your chilly bulks a new life-blast
From the Eternal Living, and ye rise
From out your stiffened postures rosy-warm,
Walking abroad a goodly company
Of living virtues at that wondrous charm,
As he with human heart and hand and eye
Walked sorrowing upon our highways then,
The Eternal Father's living gift to men !

XIV. As the pent torrent in uneasy rest
Under the griping rocks, doth ever keep
A monstrous working as it lies asleep
In the round hollow of some mountain's breast ;
Till where it hideth in its sweltering nest
Some earthquake finds it, and its waters leap
Forth to the sunshine down the mighty steep—
So in thee once was anguished forth the quest
Whereby man sought for life-power as he lay
Under his own proud heart and black despair
Wedged fast and stifled up with loads of care,
Yet at dumb struggle with the tyrant clay ;

Thou wentest down below the roots of prayer,
And he hath cried aloud since that same day !

xv. As he that parts in hatred from a friend,
Mixing with other men forgets the woe
Which anguished him when he beheld and lo
Two souls had fled asunder which did bend
Under the same blue heaven ! yet ere the end,
When the loud world hath tossed him to and fro,
Will often strangely reappear that glow
At simplest memory which some chance may send
Although much stronger bonds have lost their
power ;

So thou God-sent didst come in lowly guise
Striking on simple chords,—not with surprise
Or mightiest recollectings in that hour,
But like remembered fragrance of a flower,
A man with human heart and loving eyes !

March, 1852.

A SONG-SERMON :

Job xiv. 13-15.

RONDEL.

WOULD that thou hid me in the grave,
And kept me with death's gaoler-care !—
Until thy wrath away should wear,
A sentence fixed thy prisoner gave !
I would endure with patience brave,
So thou remembered I was there !
Would that thou hid me in the grave,
And kept me with death's gaoler-care !

To see thy creature thou wouldst crave—
Desire thy handiwork so fair ;
Then wouldst thou call through death's dank air,
And I would answer from the cave !
Would that thou hid me in the grave,
And kept me with death's gaoler-care !

WORDS IN THE NIGHT.

I WOKE at midnight, and my heart,
My beating heart, said this to me :
Thou seest the moon, how calm and bright
The world is fair by day and night,
But what is that to thee ?
One touch to me, down dips the light
Over the land and sea.
All is mine, all is my own !
Toss the purple fountain high !
The breast of man is a vat of stone ;
I am alive, I, only I !

One little touch and all is dark—
The winter with its sparkling moons,

The spring with all her violets,
The crimson dawns and rich sunsets,
The autumn's yellowing noons !
I only toss my purple jets,
And thou art one that swoons
Upon a night of gust and roar,
Shipwrecked among the waves, and seems
Across the purple hills to roam ;
Sweet odours touch him from the foam,
And downward sinking still he dreams
He walks the clover fields at home,
And hears the rattling teams.
All is mine, all is my own !
Toss the purple fountain high !
The breast of man is a vat of stone ;
I am alive, I, only I !

Thou hast beheld a throated fountain spout
Full in the air, and in the downward spray

A hovering Iris span the marble tank,
Which, as the wind came, ever rose and sank
Violet and red ; so my continual play
Makes beauty for the Gods with many a prank
Of human excellence, while they,
Weary of all the noon, in shadows sweet,
Supine and heavy-eyed rest in the boundless heat
Let the world's fountain play !
Beauty is pleasant in the eyes of Jove ;
Betwixt the wavering shadows where he lies
He marks the dancing column with his eyes
Celestial, and amid his inmost grove
Upgathers all his limbs, serenely blest,
Lulled by the mellow noise of the great world's
unrest.

One heart beats in all nature, differing
But in the work it works ; its doubts and clamours
Are but the waste and brunt of instruments
Wherewith a work is done, or as the hammers

On forge Cyclopean plied beneath the rents
Of lowest Etna, conquering into shape
The hard and scattered ore ;
Choose thou narcotics, and the dizzy grape
Outworking passion, lest with horrid crash
Thy life go from thee in a night of pain ;
So tutoring thy vision, shall the flash
Of dove white-breasted be to thee no more
Than a white stone heavy upon the plain.

Hark, the cock crows loud !
And without, all ghastly and ill,
Like a man uplift in his shroud,
The white, white morn is propped on the hill ;
And adown from the eaves, pointed and chill,
The icicles 'gin to glitter ;
And the birds, with a warble short and shrill,
Pass by the chamber-window still,
With a quick, uneasy twitter !
Let me pump warm blood, for the cold is bitter ;

And wearily, wearily, one by one,
Men awake with the weary sun !
Life is a phantom shut in thee ;
I am the master and keep the key ;
So let me toss thee the days of old,
Crimson and orange and green and gold ;
So let me fill thee yet again
With a rush of dreams from my spout amain ;
For all is mine, all is my own :
Toss the purple fountain high !
The breast of man is a vat of stone,
And I am alive, I only, I !

WHAUR's nor sun nor mune,
Laich things come abune.

THROU the heather an' how gaed the creepin' thing,
But abune was the waught o' an angel's wing.

CONSIDER THE RAVENS.

LORD, according to thy words,
I have considered thy birds ;
And I find their life good,
And better the better understood :
Sowing neither corn nor wheat,
They have all that they can eat ;
Reaping no more than they sow,
They have all they can stow ;
Having neither barn nor store,
Hungry again, they eat more.

Considering, I see too that they
Have a busy life, and plenty of play ;
In the earth they dig their bills deep,

And work well though they do not heap ;
Then to play in the air they are not loath,
And their nests between are better than both.

But this is when there blow no storms ;
When berries are plenty in winter, and worms ;
When their feathers are thick, and oil is enough
To keep the cold out and the rain off :
If there should come a long hard frost,
Then it looks as thy birds were lost.

But I consider further, and find
A hungry bird has a free mind ;
He is hungry to-day, not to-morrow ;
Steals no comfort, no grief doth borrow ;
This moment is his, thy will hath said it,
The next is nothing till thou hast made it.

Thy bird has pain, but has no fear,
Which is the worst of any gear ;

When cold and hunger and harm betide him,
He gathers them not, to stuff inside him ;
Content with the day's ill he has got,
He waits just, nor haggles with his lot ;
Neither jumbles God's will
With driblets from his own still.

But next I see, in my endeavour,
Thy birds here do not live for ever ;
That cold or hunger, sickness or age,
Finishes their earthly stage ;
The rook drops without a stroke,
And never gives another croak ;
Birds lie here, and birds lie there,
With little feathers all astare ;
And in thy own sermon, thou
That the sparrow falls dost allow.

It shall not cause me any alarm,
For neither so comes the bird to harm,

Seeing our father, thou hast said,
Is by the sparrow's dying bed ;
Therefore it is a blessed place,
And the sparrow in high grace.

It cometh therefore to this, Lord :
I have considered thy word,
And henceforth will be thy bird.

CHAINED is the Spring. The night-wind bold
Blows over the hard earth ;
Time is not more confused and cold,
Nor keeps more wintry mirth.

Yet blow, and roll the world about—
Blow, Time, blow, winter's wind !
Through chinks of time heaven peepeth out,
And Spring the frost behind.

SABBATH BELLS.

OH holy Sabbath bells,
Ye have a pleasant voice !
Through all the land your music swells,
And man with one commandment tells
To rest and to rejoice.

As birds rejoice to flee,
From dark and stormy skies,
To brighter lands beyond the sea,
Where skies are calm, and wings are free
To wander and to rise ;

As thirsty travellers sing,
Through desert paths that pass,

To hear the welcome waters spring,
And see, beyond the spray they fling,
Tall trees and waving grass ;

So we rejoice to know
Your melody begun ;
For when our paths are parched below,
Ye tell us where green pastures glow,
And living waters run.

London, Dec. 15, 1840.

HITHER an' thither, here an' awa',
Into the dub ye maunna fa' ;
Oot o' the dub wad ye come wi' speed,
Ye maun lift yer han's abune yer heid.

FIGHTING.

HERE is a temple strangely wrought :

Within it I can see

Two spirits of a diverse thought

Contend for mastery.

One is an angel fair and bright—

Adown the aisle comes he,

Adown the aisle in raiment white,

A creature fair to see.

The other wears an evil mien,

And he hath doubtless slipt,

A fearful being dark and lean,

Up from the mouldy crypt.

* * * *

Is that the roof that grows so black ?
Did some one call my name ?
Was it the bursting thunder crack
That filled this place with flame ?

I move—I wake from out my sleep—
Some one hath victor been !
I see two radiant pinions sweep,
And I am borne between.

Beneath the clouds that under roll
An upturned face I see—
A dead man's face, but, ah, the soul
Was right well known to me !

A man's dead face ! Away I haste
Through regions calm and fair :
Go vanquish sin, and thou shalt taste
The same celestial air.

AFTER THE FASHION OF AN OLD EMBLEM.

I HAVE long enough been working down in my
cellar,

Working spade and pick, boring-chisel and drill;

I long for wider spaces, airy, clear-dark, and
stellar :

Successless labour never yet the love of it did
fill.

More profit surely lies in a holy, pure quiescence,

In a setting forth of cups to catch the heavenly
rain,

In a yielding of the being to the ever waiting
presence,

In a turning of the face up homeward again !

Up to my garret, its storm-windows and skylights !

There I'll lay me on the floor, and patient let
the sun,

The moon and the stars, the blueness and the
twilights,

Do what they will with me, and wait till they
have done.

But lo, I hear a waving on the roof of great pinions !

'Tis the labour of a windmill, broad-spreading
to the wind !

Lo, down there goes a shaft through all the
house-dominions !

I trace it to a cellar, whose door I cannot find.

But there I hear ever a keen diamond-drill in motion,

Now fast and now slow, as the wind sits in the
sails,

Drilling and boring to the far eternal ocean,

The living well of all wells whose water never fails.

So now I go no more to the cellar to my labour,
But up to my garret where those arms are ever
going ;

There the sky is ever o'er me, and the wind my
blessed neighbour,
And the prayer-handle ready turns the sails to
its fair blowing.

Blow, blow, my blessed wind ; oh, keep ever
blowing ;

Keep the great windmill going full and free ;
So shall the diamond-drill down below keep going,
Till in burst the waters of God's eternal sea.

GEORGE ROLLESTON.

DEAD art thou? No more dead than was the maid
Over whose couch the saving God did stand—
“She is not dead but sleepeth,” said,
And took her by the hand !

Thee knowledge never from Life's pathway wiled,
But following still where life's great father led,
He turned, and taking up his child,
Raised thee too from the dead.

O living, thou hast passed thy second birth—
Found all things new, and some things lovely
strange ;
But thou wilt not forget the earth,
Nor in thy loving change.

A PRAYER IN SICKNESS.

THOU foldest me in sickness ;
Thou callest through the cloud ;
I fight away the thickness
Of the folding, swathing shroud :
Oh, let me see thy face,
The only perfect grace
That thou canst show thy child.

O father, being-giver,
Take off the sickness-cloud ;
Saviour, my soul deliver ;
Take off this body's shroud :
Till I have seen thy face
I am not full of grace,
I am not reconciled.

QUIET DEAD!

QUIET, quiet dead,
Have ye aught to say
From your hidden bed
In the earthy clay?

Fathers, children, mothers,
Ye are very quiet ;
Can ye shout, my brothers?
I would know you by it !

Have ye any words
That are like to ours?
Have ye any birds?
Have ye any flowers?

Could ye rise a minute
When the sun is warm?
I would know you in it,
I would take no harm.

I am half afraid
In the ghostly night;
If ye all obeyed
I should fear you quite.

But when day is breaking
In the purple east,
I would meet you waking—
One of you at least—

When the sun is tipping
Every stony block;
And the sun is slipping
Down the weathercock.

Quiet, quiet dead,
I will not perplex you ;
What my tongue hath said
Haply it may vex you !

Yet I hear you speaking
With a quiet speech,
As if ye were seeking
Better things to teach :

“ Wait a little longer,
“ Suffer and endure,
“ Till your heart is stronger,
“ And your eyes are pure—

“ A little longer, brother,
“ With your fellow men ;
“ We will meet each other
“ Otherwhere again.”

LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE.

SOMETIMES, O Lord, thou lightest in my head
A lamp that well might pharos all the lands ;
Anon the light will neither burn nor spread—
Shrouded in danger gray the beacon stands.

A pharos? Oh, dull brain! oh, poor quenched
lamp,
Under a bushel, with an earthy smell!
Mouldering it lies, in rust and eating damp,
While the slow oil keeps oozing from its cell!

For me it were enough to be a flower,
Knowing its root in thee was somewhere hid—
To blossom at the far appointed hour,
And fold in sleep when thou, my nature, bid.

But hear my brethren crying in the dark !

Light up my lamp that it may shine abroad.

Fain would I cry—See, brothers ! sisters, mark !

This is the shining of light's father, God.

TRIOLET.

WHEN the heart is a cup

In the body low lying,

To catch every drop

In the heart that's a cup,

As it falls from high up—

It is good to be dying,

With the heart for a cup

In the body low lying.

THE SOULS' RISING.

SEE how the storm of life ascends
Up through the shadow of the world !
Beyond our gaze the line extends,
Like wreaths of vapour tempest-hurled !
Grasp tighter, brother, lest the storm
Should sweep us down from where we stand,
And we may catch some human form
We know, amongst the straining band.

See ! see ! in yonder misty cloud
One whirlwind sweep, and we shall hear
The voice that waxes yet more loud
And louder still approaching near.

Tremble not, brother, fear not thou,
For yonder wild and mystic strain

Will bring before us strangely now
The visions of our youth again !

Listen ! oh listen !

See how its eyeballs roll and glisten
With a wild and fearful stare
Upwards through the shining air,
Or backwards with averted look,
As a child were gazing at a book
Full of tales of fear and dread
When the thick night-wind came hollow and dead !

Round about it, wavering and light,
As the moths flock round a candle at night,
A crowd of phantoms sheeted and dumb
Strain to its words as they shrilly come :
Brother, my brother, dost thou hear ?
They pierce through the tumult sharp and clear !

“ The rush of speed is on my soul,
My eyes are blind with things I see ;
I cannot grasp the awful whole,
I cannot gird the mystery !

The mountains sweep like mist away ;
The great sea shakes like flakes of fire ;
The rush of things I cannot see
Is mounting upward higher and higher !
Oh ! life was still and full of calm
In yonder spot of earthly ground,
But now it rolls a thunder-psalm,
Its voices drown my ear in sound.
Would God I were a child again,
To nurse the seeds of faith and power ;
I might have clasped in wisdom then
A wing to beat this awful hour !
The dullest things would take my marks—
That took my marks like drifted snow—
God ! how the footsteps rise in sparks,
Rise like myself and onward go !
Have pity, O ye driving things
That once like me had human form !
For I am driven for lack of wings
A shreddy cloud before the storm ! ”

How its words went through me then,
Like a long forgotten pang,
Till the storm's embrace again
Swept it far with sudden clang !
—Ah ! methinks I see it still :
Let us follow it, my brother,
Keeping close to one another,
Blessing God for might of will !
Closer, closer, side by side !
Ours are wings that deftly glide,
Upwards, downwards, and crosswise,
Flashing past our ears and eyes,
Splitting up the comet-tracks
With a whirlwind at our backs !

How the sky is blackening !
Yet the race is never slackening ;
Swift, continual, and strong,
Streams the torrent slope along,
Like a tidal surge of faces
Molten into one despair ;

Each the other now displaces,
A continual whirl of spaces ;
Ah, my fainting eyesight reels
As I strive in vain to stare
On a thousand turning wheels !
Dimly in the gloom descending
Faces with each other blending !—
Let us beat the vapours back :
We are yet upon his track.

Didst thou see a spirit halt
Upright on a cloudy peak,
As the lightning's horrid fault
Smote a gash into the cheek
Of the grinning thunder-cloud,
Which doth still besiege and crowd
Upward from the nether pits
Where the monster Chaos sits,
Building o'er the fleeing rack
Roofs of thunder long and black ?
Yes, I see it ! I will shout

Till I stop the horrid rout.
Ho, ho ! spirit-phantom, tell
Is thy path to heaven or hell ?
We would hear thee yet again,
What thy standing amongst men,
What thy former history,
And thy hope of things to be !
Wisdom still we gain from hearing :
We would know, we would know
Whither thou art steering—
Unto weal or woe.

Ah, I cannot hear it speaking !
Yet it seems as it were seeking
Through our eyes our souls to reach
With a quaint mysterious speech,
As with stretched and crossing palms
One were tracing diagrams
On the ebbing of the beach,
Till with wild unmeasured dance
All the tiptoe waves advance,

Seize him by the shoulder, cover,
Turn him up and toss him over :
He is vanished from our sight,
Nothing mars the quiet night
Save a speck of gloom afar
Like the ruin of a star !

Brother, streams it ever so,
Such a torrent tide of woe ?
Ah, I know not ; let us haste
Upwards from this dreary waste,
Up to where like music flowing
Gentler feet are ever going,
Streams of life encircling run
Round about the spirit-sun !
Up beyond the storm and rush
With our lesson let us rise !
Lo, the morning's golden flush
Meets us midway in the skies !
Perished all the dream and strife !
Death is swallowed up of Life !

AWAKE !

THE stars are all watching ;
God's angel is catching
At thy skirts in the darkness deep !
Gold hinges grating,
The mighty dead waiting,
Why dost thou sleep ?

Years without number,
Ages of slumber,
Stiff in the track of the infinite One !
Dead, can I think it ?
Dropt like a trinket,
A thing whose uses are done !

White wings are crossing,
 Glad waves are tossing,
 The earth flames out in crimson and green ;
 Spring is appearing,
 Summer is nearing—
 Where hast thou been ?

Down in some cavern,
 Death's sleepy tavern,
 Housing, carousing, with spectres of night ?
 There is my right hand !
 Grasp it full tight and
 Spring to the light !

Wonder, oh, wonder !
 How the life-thunder
 Bursts on his ear in horror and dread !
 Happy shapes meet him ;
 Heaven and earth greet him ;
 Life from the dead !

TO AN AUTOGRAPH-HUNTER.

SEEK not my name—it doth no virtue bear ;

Seek, seek thine own primeval name to find—
The name God called when thy ideal fair
Arose in deeps of the eternal mind.

When that thou findest, thou art straight a lord
Of time and space—art heir of all things grown ;
And not my name, poor, earthly label-word,
But I myself thenceforward am thine own.

Thou hearest not ? Or hearest as a man
Who hears the muttering of a foolish spell ?
My very shadow would feel strange and wan
In thy abode :—I say *No*, and farewell.

Thou understandest ? Then it is enough—

No shadow-deputy shall mock my friend !

We walk the same path, over smooth and rough,

To meet ere long at the unending end.

RICH is the fancy which can double back

All seeming forms, and from cold icicles

Build up high glittering palaces where dwells

Summer perfection, moulding all this wrack

To spirit symmetry, and doth not lack

The power to hear amidst the funeral bells

The eternal heart's wind-melody which swells

In whirlwind flashes all along its track !

So hath the sun made all the winter mine

With gardens springing round me fresh and fair ;

On hidden leaves uncounted jewels shine ;

I live with forms of beauty everywhere,

Peopling the crumbling waste and icy pool

With sights and sounds of life most beautiful.

WITH A COPY OF "IN
MEMORIAM."

TO E. M. H.

DEAR friend, you love the poet's song,
And here is one for your regard.
You know the "melancholy bard,"
Whose grief is wise as well as strong ;

Already something understand
For whom he mourns and what he sings,
And how he wakes with golden strings
The echoes of " the silent land ; "

How, restless, faint, and worn with grief,
Yet loving all and hoping all,
He gazes where the shadows fall,
And finds in darkness some relief ;

And how he sends his cries across,
His cries for him that comes no more,
Till one might think that silent shore
Full of the burden of his loss ;

And how there comes sublimer cheer—
Not darkness solacing sad eyes,
Not the wild joy of mournful cries,
But light that makes his spirit clear ;

How, while he gazes, something high,
Something of Heaven has fallen on him,
His distance and his future dim
Broken into a dawning sky !

Something of this, dear friend, you know ;
And will you take the book from me
That holds this mournful melody,
And softens grief to sadness so ?

Perhaps it scarcely suits the day
Of joyful hopes and memories clear,
When love should have no thought of fear,
And only smiles be round your way ;

Yet from the mystery and the gloom,
From tempted faith and conquering trust,
From spirit stronger than the dust,
And love that looks beyond the tomb,

What can there be but good to win,
But hope for life, but love for all,
But strength whatever may befall ?—
So for the year that you begin,

For all the years that follow this,
While a long happy life endures,
This hope, this love, this strength be yours,
And afterwards a larger bliss !

May nothing in this mournful song
Too much take off your thoughts from time,
For joy should fill your vernal prime,
And peace your summer mild and long.

And may his love who can restore
All losses, give all new good things,
Like loving eyes and sheltering wings
Be round us all for evermore !

MY thoughts are like worms in a starless gloamin ;
My hert like a sponge that's fillit wi' gall ;
My soul like a bodiless ghaist sent a roamin',
To bide i' the mirk till the great trumpet call.

THEY ARE BLIND.

THEY are blind, and they are dead :

We will wake them as we go ;

There are words have not been said,

There are sounds they do not know.

We will pipe and we will sing—

With the Music and the Spring

Set their hearts a wondering.

They are tired of what is old ;

We will give it voices new ;

For the half hath not been told

Of the Beautiful and True.

Drowsy eyelids shut and sleeping !

Heavy eyes oppressed with weeping !

Flashes through the lashes leaping !

Ye that have a pleasant voice,
Hither come without delay ;
Ye will never have a choice
Like to that ye have to-day :
Round the wide world we will go,
Singing through the frost and snow,
Till the daisies are in blow.

Ye that cannot pipe or sing,
Ye must also come with speed ;
Ye must come, and with you bring
Weighty word and weightier deed—
Helping hands and loving eyes !
These will make them truly wise—
Then will be our Paradise.

March 27, 1852.

WHEN THE STORM WAS PROUDEST.

WHEN the storm was proudest,
And the wind was loudest,
I heard the hollow caverns drinking down below ;
When the stars were bright,
And the ground was white,
I heard the grasses springing underneath the snow.

Many voices spake—
The river to the lake,
And the iron-ribbed sky was talking to the sea ;
And every starry spark
Made music with the dark,
And said how bright and beautiful everything
must be.

When the sun was setting,
All the clouds were getting

Beautiful and silvery in the rising moon ;

Beneath the leafless trees

Wrangling in the breeze,

I could hardly see them for the leaves of June.

When the day had ended,

And the night descended

I heard the sound of streams that I heard not
through the day,

And every peak afar

Was ready for a star,

And they climbed and rolled around until the
morning gray.

Then slumber soft and holy

Came down upon me slowly,

And I went I know not whither, and I lived I
know not how ;

My glory had been banished,

For when I woke it vanished ;

But I waited on its coming, and I am waiting now.

THE DEIL'S FORHOOIT HIS AIN.

The Deil's forhooit his ain, his ain !

The Deil's forhooit his ain !

His bairns are greitin' in ilka neuk,

For the Deil's forhooit his ain.

THE Deil he took his stick and his hat,

And his yallow gloves on he drew :

“ The coal's sae dear, and the preachin' sae flat !

And I canna be aye wi' you.

The Deil's &c.

“ Sae here's my blessin' !—and noo I'll gang—

Wi' jist a word o' advice ;

And gien onything efter that gaes wrang,

It'll be yer ain wull and ch'ice :—

“There’s a heap o’ diseases gaein’ aboot—

Whiles ane, and whiles a’ thegither :

Ane’s ca’d Repentance—haith ! haud it oot—

It comes wi’ a change o’ weather.

The Deil’s &c.

“Luik efter your liver—that’s the place

Whaur Conscience gars fowk grin ;

Some fowk has mair o’ ’t, and some has less—

It comes o’ breedin’ in.

“And there’s waur nor diseases gaein’ aboot—

There’s a heap o’ fair-spoken lees,

And there’s naething in natur’—in or oot,

’At waur with the health agrees.

“There’s what they ca’ Faith, that wad aye be
fain ;

And Houp that luiks and tynes a’ ;

And Love that never yet fand its ain,

Till it turnt its face to the wa’.

“ And Trouth—the sough o’ a sickly win’ ;
And Richt—what needna be ;
And Beauty—nae deeper nor the skin ;
And Blude—that’s naething but bree.

The Deil’s &c.

“ But there’s ae gran’ doctor for a’ and mair—
For sickness and lees in a breath—
My bairns, I lea’ ye wi’oot a care
To yer best freen’, Doctor Death.

“ He’ll no distress ye : as quaiet’s a cat
He grips ye, and a’thing’s ower !
There’s naething mair ’at ye wad be at ;
There’s never a sweet nor sour.

“ They ca’ ’t a sleep, but it’s better bliss,
For ye wauken up no more ;
They ca’ ’t a mansion—and sae it is,
And the coffin-lid’s the door.

“ Jist ae word mair—and it’s *verbum sat*—

I hae preacht it mony’s the year :

Whaur there’s naething at a’ to be frichtit at,

There’s naething at a’ to fear.

The Deil’s &c.

“ I dinna say ’at there isna a hell—

To lee wad be a disgrace :

I bide there whan I’m at hame mysel’,

And it’s no sic a byous ill place.

“ But yon blue thing they ca’ the lift

Is but hell turnt upside doon ;

A how like a bossie, whiles fu’ o’ drift,

And whiles o’ a rum’lin’ soon’.

“ Lat auld wives tell their tales i’ the reek !

Men hae to du wi’ fac’s :

There’s naebody there to watch, and keek

Intil yer wee mistaks.

“ But nor ben there’s naebody there,
Frae the yird to the farthest spark ;
Ye’ll rub the knees o’ yer breeks to the bare
Afore ye’ll pray ye a sark.

The Deil’s &c.

“ Sae fare ye weel, my bonny men !
And weel may ye thrive and the !
Gien I dinna see ye some time again,
It’ll be ’at ye’re no to see.’

He cockit his hat ower ane o’ his cheeks,
And awa’ wi’ a halt and a spang ;
For his tail was doon ae leg o’ his breeks,
And his butes war a half ower lang.

The Deil’s forhooit his ain, his ain

The Deil’s forhooit his ain !

His bairns are greitin’ in ilka neuk,

For the Deil’s forhooit his ain.

THE AULD FISHER.

THERE was an auld fisher—he sat by the wa',
An' luikit oot ower the sea ;
The bairnies war playin', he smilit on them a',
But the tear stude in his e'e.

An' it's oh to win awa', awa'

An' it's oh to win awa'

*Whaur the bairns come hame, an' the wives they
bide,*

An' God is the father o' a' !

Jocky an' Jeamy an' Tammy, oot there,
A' i' the boatie gaed doon ;
An' I'm ower auld to fish ony mair,
An' I hinna the chance to droon !

An' it's oh to win awa', awa' ! &c.

An' Jeanie she grat to ease her hert,

An' she easit hersel' awa' ;

But I'm ower auld for the tears to stert,

An' sae the sighs maun blaw.

An' it's oh to win awa', awa' ! &c.

Lord, steer me hame whaur my Lord has steerit,

For I'm tired o' life's rockin' sea ;

An' dinna be lang, for I'm nearhan' fearit

'At I'm 'maist ower auld to dee.

An' it's oh to win awa', awa' !

An' it's oh to win awa'

*Whaur the bairns come hame, an' the wives they
bide,*

An' God is the father o' a' !

SONNETS.

TUMULTUOUS rushing o'er the outstretched
plains ;

A wildered maze of comets and of suns ;
The blood of changeless God that ever runs
With quick diastole up the immortal veins ;
A phantom host that moves and works in chains ;
A monstrous fiction, which, collapsing, stuns
The mind to stupor and amaze at once ;
A tragedy which that man best explains
Who rushes blindly on his wild career
With trampling hoofs and sound of mailed war,
Who will not nurse a life to win a tear,
But is extinguished like a falling star ;—
Such will at times this life appear to me,
Until I learn to read more perfectly.

HOM. IL. V. 403.

IF thou art tempted by a thought of ill,
Crave not too soon for victory, nor deem
Thou art a coward if thy safety seem
To spring too little from a righteous will ;
For there is nightmare on thee, nor until
Thy soul hath caught the morning's early gleam
Seek thou to analyze the monstrous dream
By painful introversion ; rather fill
Thine eye with forms thou knowest to be truth ;
But see thou cherish higher hope than this,—
A hope hereafter that thou shalt be fit
Calm-eyed to face distortion, and to sit
Transparent among other forms of youth,
Who own no impulse save to God and bliss.

AND must must I ever wake, gray dawn, to know
Thee standing sadly by me like a ghost ?

I am perplexed with thee, that thou should'st cost
This Earth another turning : all aglow
Thou shouldst have reached me, with a purple show
Along far mountain-tops ! and I would post
Over the breadth of seas, though I were lost
In the hot phantom-chase for life, if so
Thou camest ever with this numbing sense
Of chilly distance and unlovely light ;
Waking this gnawing soul anew to fight
With its perpetual load : I drive thee hence !
I have another mountain-range from whence
Bursteth a sun unutterably bright.

GALILEO.

“ AND yet it moves ! ” Ah, Truth, where wert
thou then,
When all for thee they racked each piteous limb ?
Wert thou in heaven, and busy with thy hymn,
When those poor hands convulsed that held thy pen ?

Art thou a phantom that deceivest men
To their undoing ? or dost thou watch him
Pale, cold, and silent in his dungeon dim ?
And wilt thou ever speak to him again ?
“ It moves, it moves ! Alas, my flesh was weak
That was a hideous dream ! I’ll cry aloud
How the green bulk wheels sunward day by day !
Ah me ! ah me ! perchance my heart was proud
That I alone should know that word to speak ;
And now, sweet Truth, shine upon these, I pray.”

If thou wouldst live the Truth in very deed,
Thou hast thy joy, but thou hast more of pain.
Others will live in peace, and thou be fain
To bargain with despair, and in thy need
To make thy meal upon the scantiest weed.
These palaces, for thee they stand in vain,
Thine is a ruinous hut ; and oft the rain
Shall drench thee in the midnight ; yea, the speed
Of earth outstrip thee, pilgrim, while thy feet

Move slowly up the heights. Yet will there come
Through the time-rents about thy moving cell,
Shot from the Truth's own bow, and flaming sweet,
An arrow for despair, and oft the hum
Of far-off populous realms where spirits dwell.

SPEAK, Prophet of the Lord ! We may not start
To find thee with us in thine ancient dress,
Haggard and pale from some bleak wilderness,
Empty of all save God and thy loud heart,
Nor with like rugged message quick to dart
Into the hideous fiction mean and base ;
But yet, O prophet man, we need not less,
But more of earnest, though it is thy part
To deal in other words, if thou wouldst smite
The living Mammon, seated, not as then
In bestial quiescence grimly dight,
But *robed as priest, and honoured of good men,*
Yet thrice as much an idol-god as when
He stared at his own feet from morn to night.

THE WATCHER.

FROM out a windy cleft there comes a gaze
Of eyes unearthly, which go to and fro
Upon the people's tumult, for below
The nations smite each other : no amaze
Troubles their liquid rolling, or affrays
Their deep-set contemplation ; steadily glow
Those ever holier eyeballs, for they grow
Liker unto the eyes of one that prays.
And if those clasped hands tremble, comes a
power
As of the might of worlds, and they are holden
Blessing above us in the sunrise golden ;
And they will be uplifted till that hour
Of terrible rolling which shall rise and shake
This conscious nightmare from us and we wake.

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

I.

ONE do I see and twelve ; but second there
Methinks I know thee, thou beloved one ;
Not from thy nobler port, for there are none
More quiet-featured : some there are who bear
Their message on their brows, while others wear
A look of large commission, nor will shun
The fiery trial, so their work is done ;
But thou hast parted with thine eyes in prayer,—
Unearthly are they both ; and so thy lips
Seem like the porches of the spirit land ;
For thou hast laid a mighty treasure by,
Unlocked by Him in Nature, and thine eye
Burns with a vision and apocalypse
Thy own sweet soul can hardly understand.

II.

A Boanerges too ! Upon my heart
It lay a heavy hour : features like thine

Should glow with other message than the shine
Of the earth-burrowing levin, and the start
That cleaveth horrid gulfs ! Awful and swart
A moment stoodest thou, but less divine—
Brawny and clad in ruin !—till with mine
Thy heart made answering signals, and apart
Beamed forth thy two rapt eyeballs doubly clear,
And twice as strong because thou didst thy duty,
And, though affianced to immortal Beauty,
Hiddest not weakly underneath her veil
The pest of Sin and Death which maketh pale :
Henceforward be thy spirit doubly dear !

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

THERE is not any weed but hath its shower,
THERE is not any pool but hath its star ;
And black and muddy though the waters are,
We may not miss the glory of a flower,
And winter moons will give them magic power
To spin in cylinders of diamond spar ;

And everything hath beauty near and far,
And keepeth close and waiteth on its hour.
And I when I encounter on my road
A human soul that looketh black and grim,
Shall I more ceremonious be than God?
Shall I refuse to watch one hour with him
Who once beside our deepest woe did bud
A patient watching flower about the brim?

'Tis not the violent hands alone that bring
The curse, the ravage, and the downward doom,
Although to these full oft the yawning tomb
Owes deadly surfeit ; but a keener sting,
A more immortal agony will cling
To the half fashioned sin which would assume
Fair Virtue's garb ; the eye that sows the gloom
With quiet seeds of Death henceforth to spring
What time the sun of passion burning fierce
Breaks through the kindly cloud of circumstance ;

The bitter word, and the unkindly glance ;
The crust and canker coming with the years,
Are liker Death than arrows and the lance
Which through the living heart at once doth pierce.

SPOKEN OF SEVERAL PHILOSOPHERS.

I PRAY you, all ye men, who put your trust
In moulds and systems and well-tackled gear,
Holding that Nature lives from year to year
In one continual round because she must—
Set me not down, I pray you, in the dust
Of all these centuries, like a pot of beer—
A pewter-pot disconsolately clear,
Which holds a potful, as is right and just.
I will grow clamorous—by the rood, I will,
If thus ye use me like a pewter pot !
Good friend, thou art a toper and a sot—
I will not be the lead to hold thy swill,
Nor any lead : I will arise and spill
Thy silly beverage, spill it piping hot !

NATURE, to him no message dost thou bear,
Who in thy beauty findeth not the power
To gird himself more strongly for the hour
Of night and darkness. Oh, what colours rare
The woods, the valleys, and the mountains wear
To him who knows thy secret, and, in shower,
And fog, and ice-cloud, hath a secret bower
Where he may rest until the heavens are fair !
Not with the rest of slumber, but the trance
Of onward movement steady and serene,
Where oft in struggle and in contest keen
His eyes will opened be, and all the dance
Of life break on him, and a wide expanse
Roll upward through the void, sunny and green !

TO JUNE.

AH, truant, thou art here again, I see !
For in a season of such wretched weather
I thought that thou hadst left us altogether,
Although I could not choose but fancy thee

Skulking about the hill-tops, whence the glee
Of thy blue laughter peeped at times, or rather
Thy bashful awkwardness, as doubtful whether
Thou shouldst be seen in such a company
Of ugly runaways, unshapely heaps
Of ruffian vapour, broken from restraint
Of their slim prison in the ocean deeps.
But yet I may not chide : fall to thy books—
Fall to immediately without complaint—
There they are lying, hills and vales and brooks.

SUMMER, sweet Summer, many-fingered Summer!
We hold thee very dear, as well we may :
It is the kernel of the year to-day—
All hail to thee ! thou art a welcome comer !
If every insect were a fairy drummer,
And I a fifer that could deftly play,
We'd give the old Earth such a roundelay
That she would cast all thought of labour from her.

—Ah ! what is this upon my window-pane ?
Some sulky, drooping cloud comes pouting up,
Stamping its glittering feet along the plain !—
Well, I will let that idle fancy drop !
Oh, how the spouts are bubbling with the rain !
And all the earth shines like a silver cup !

ON A MIDGE.

WHENCE do ye come, ye creatures ? Each of you
Is perfect as an angel ! wings and eyes
Stupendous in their beauty—gorgeous dyes
In feathery fields of purple and of blue !
Would God I saw a moment as ye do !
I would become a molecule in size,
Rest with you, hum with you, or slanting rise
Along your one dear sunbeam, could I view
The pearly secret which each tiny fly—
Each tiny fly that hums and bobs and stirs—
Hides in its little breast eternally
From you, ye prickly, grim philosophers,

With all your theories that sound so high :
Hark to the buz a moment, my good sirs !

HERE stands a giant stone from whose far top
Comes down the sounding water : let me gaze
Till every sense of man and human ways
Is wrecked and quenched forever, and I drop
Into the whirl of time, and without stop
Pass downward thus ! Again my eyes I raise
To thee, dark rock ; and through the mist and haze
My strength returns when I behold thy prop
Gleam stern and steady through the wavering wrack.
Surely thy strength is human, and like me
Thou bearest loads of thunder on thy back !
And, lo, a smile upon thy visage black—
A breezy tuft of grass which I can see
Waving serenely from a sunlit crack !

ABOVE my head the great pine-branches tower ;
Backwards and forwards each to the other bends,

Beckoning the tempest-cloud which hither wends
Like a slow-laboured thought, heavy with power :
Hark to the patter of the coming shower !
Let me be silent while the Almighty sends
His thunder-word along—but when it ends
I will arise and fashion from the hour
Words of stupendous import, fit to guard
High thoughts and purposes, which I may wave,
When the temptation cometh close and hard,
Like fiery brands betwixt me and the grave
Of meaner things—to which I am a slave,
If evermore I keep not watch and ward.

I DO remember how, when very young,
I saw the great sea first, and heard its swell
As I drew nearer, caught within the spell
Of its vast size and its mysterious tongue.
How the floor trembled, and the dark boat swung
With a man in it, and a great wave fell

Within a stone's cast ! Words may never tell
The passion of the moment, when I flung
All childish records by, and felt arise
A thing that died no more ! An awful power
I claimed with trembling hands and eager eyes,
Mine, mine forever, an immortal dower.—
The noise of waters soundeth to this hour
When I look seaward through the quiet skies.

ON THE SOURCE OF THE ARVE.

HEAR'ST thou the dash of water, loud and hoarse,
With its perpetual tidings upward climb,
Struggling against the wind ? Oh, how sublime !
For not in vain from its portentous source,
Thy heart, wild stream, hath yearned for its full force,
But from thine ice-toothed caverns, dark as time,
At last thou issuest, dancing to the rime
Of thy outvolleying freedom ! Lo, thy course
Lies straight before thee as the arrow flies !
Right to the ocean-plains, away, away !

Thy parent waits thee, and her sunset dyes
Are ruffled for thy coming, and the gray
Of all her glittering borders flashes high
Against the glittering rocks—oh, haste, and fly !

LIE down upon the ground, thou hopeless one !
Press thy face in the grass, and do not speak.
Dost feel the green globe whirl? Seven times a
week

Climbeth she out of darkness to the sun,
Which is her God ; seven times she doth not shun
Awful eclipse, laying her patient cheek
Upon a pillow ghost-beset with shriek
Of voices utterless, which rave and run
Through all the star-penumbra, craving light
And tidings of the dawn from East and West.
Calmly she sleepeth, and her sleep is blest
With heavenly visions, and the joy of Night
Treading aloft with moons ; nor hath she fright
Though cloudy tempests beat upon her breast.

OFT, as I rest in quiet peace, am I
Thrust out at sudden doors, and madly driven
Through desert solitudes, and thunder-riven
Black passages which have not any sky :
The scourge is on me now, with all the cry
Of ancient life that hath with murder striven.
How many an anguish hath gone up to heaven !
How many a hand in prayer been lifted high,
When the black fate came onward with the rush
Of whirlwind, avalanche, or fiery spume !
Even at my feet is cleft a shivering tomb
Beneath the waves ; or else, with solemn hush,
The graveyard opens, and I feel a crush
As if we were all huddled in one doom.

COMES there, O Earth, no breathing time for thee,
No pause upon thy many-chequered lands ?
Now resting on my bed with listless hands,
I mourn thee resting not. Continually

Hear I the plashing borders of the sea
Answer each other from the rocks and sands.
Troop all the rivers seawards ; nothing stands,
But with strange noises hasteth terribly.
Loam-eared hyenas go a moaning by ;
Howls to each other all the bloody crew
Of Afric's tigers ; but, O men, from you
Comes this perpetual sound more loud and high
Than aught that vexes air ! I hear the cry
Of infant generations rising too !

MY TWO GENIUSES.

I.

ONE is a slow and melancholy maid ;
I know not if she cometh from the skies,
Or from the sleepy gulfs, but she will rise
Often before me in the twilight-shade,
Holding a bunch of poppies and a blade
Of springing wheat : prostrate my body lies

Before her on the turf, the while she ties
A fillet of the weed about my head ;
And in the gaps of sleep I seem to hear
A gentle rustle like the stir of corn,
And words like odours thronging to my ear :
“ Lie still, beloved—still until the morn ;
Lie still with me upon this rolling sphere—
Still till the judgment ; thou art faint and worn.”

II.

THE other meets me in the public throng ;
Her hair streams backward from her loose attire ;
She hath a trumpet and an eye of fire ;
She points me downward, steadily and long :—
“ There is thy grave—arise, my son, be strong !
Hands are upon thy crown—awake, aspire
To immortality ; heed not the lyre
Of the Enchantress, nor her poppy-song ;
But in the stillness of the summer calm
Tremble for what is Godlike in thy being.

Listen a while, and thou shalt hear the psalm
Of victory sung by creatures past thy seeing ;
And from far battle-fields there comes the neighing
Of dreadful onset, though the air is balm."

III.

MAID with the poppies, must I let thee go ?
Alas, I may not ; thou art likewise dear ;
I am but human, and thou hast a tear,
When she hath nought but splendour, and the glow
Of a wild energy that mocks the flow
Of the poor sympathies which keep us here :
Lay past thy poppies, and come twice as near,
And I will teach thee, and thou too shalt grow ;
And thou shalt walk with me in open day
Through the rough thoroughfares with quiet grace ;
And the wild-visaged maid shall lead the way,
Timing her footsteps to a gentler pace
As her great orbs turn ever on thy face,
Drinking in draughts of loving help alway.

THERE is a bellowing in me, as of might
Unfleshed and visionless, mangling the air
With horrible convulse, as if it bare
The cruel weight of worlds, but could not fight
With the thick-dropping clods, and could but bite
A vapour-cloud ! Oh, I will climb the stair
Of the great universe, and lay me there
Even at the threshold of his gate, despite
The tempest, and the weakness, and the rush
Of this quick crowding on me ! Oh, I dream !
Now I am sailing swiftly, as we seem
To do in sleep ! and I can hear the gush
Of a melodious wave that carries me
On on for ever to eternity !

CRY out upon the crime, and then let slip
The dogs of hate, whose hanging muzzles track
The bloody secret ; let the welkin crack
Reverberating, while ye dance and skip

About the horrid blaze, or else ye strip,
More secretly, for the avenging rack,
Him who hath done the deed, till, oozing black,
Ye watch the anguish from his nostrils drip,
And all the knotted limbs lie quivering ;
Or, if your hearts disdain such banqueting,
With wide and tearless eyes go staring through
The murder-cells ; but think, that, if your knees
Bow not to holiness, then even in you
Lie deeper gulfs and blacker crimes than these.

THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Now have I grown a sharpness and an edge
Unto my future nights, and I will cut
Sheer through the ebon gates that yet will shut
On every set of day ; or as a sledge
Drawn over snowy plains where not a hedge
Breaks this Aurora's dancing, nothing but
The one cold Esquimaux's unlikely hut
That swims in the broad moonlight ! Lo, a wedge

Of the clean meteor hath been brightly driven
Right home into the fastness of the north !
Anon it quickeneth up into the heaven—
And I with it have clomb and spreaded forth
Upon the crisp and cooling atmosphere !
My soul is all abroad ; I cannot find it here !

WITHIN each living man there doth reside,
In some unrifled chamber of the heart,
A hidden treasure : wayward as thou art,
I love thee, man, and bind thee to my side ;
By that sweet act I purify my pride,
And hasten onward—willing even to part
With pleasant graces : though thy hue is swart,
I bear thee company, thou art my guide !
Even in thy sinning wise beyond thy ken,
To thee a subtle debt my soul is owing !
I take an impulse from the worst of men
That lends a wing unto my onward going ;

Then let me pay them gladly back again
With prayer and love from Faith and Duty flowing.

WRITTEN ON A STORMY NIGHT.

O WILD and dark ! a night hath found me now
Wherein I mingle with that element
Sent madly loose through the wide staring rent
In yon tormented branches ! I will bow
A while unto the storm, and thenceforth grow
Into a mighty patience strongly bent
Before the unconquering power which hither sent
These winds to fight their battles on my brow !
Again the loud boughs thunder ! and the din
Licks up my footfall from the hissing earth !
But I have found a mighty peace within,
And I have risen into a home of mirth !
Wildly I climb above the shaking spires,
Above the sobbing clouds, up through the steady
fires !

A POWER is on me, and my soul must speak
To thee, thou grey, grey man, whom I behold
With those white-headed children. I am bold
To commune with thy setting, and to wreak
My doubts on thy grey hair, for I would seek
Thee in that other world, but I am told
Thou goest elsewhere and wilt never hold
Thy head so high as now. Oh I were weak,
Weak even to despair, could I forego
The tender vision which will give somehow
Thee standing brightly one day even as now !
Thou art a very grey old man, and so
I may not pass thee darkly, but bestow
A look of reverence on thy wrinkled brow.

METHOUGHT I stood among the stars alone,
Watching a grey parched orb which onward flew
Half blinded by the dusty winds that blew—
Empty as Death and barren as a stone—
The pleasant sound of water all unknown—

When, as I looked in wonderment, there grew,
High in the air above, a drop of dew,
Which, gathering slowly through long cycles, shone
Like a great tear ; and then at last it fell
Clasping the orb, which drank it greedily,
With a delicious noise and upward swell
Of sweet cool joy that tossed me like a sea ;
And then the thick life sprang as from a grave,
With trees, flowers, boats upon the bounding wave !

TO A THUNDER CLOUD.

OH, melancholy fragment of the night,
Drawing thy lazy web against the sun,
Thou shouldst have waited till the day was done,
With kindred glooms to build thy fane aright,
Sublime amid the ruins of the light !
But thus to shape our glories one by one
With fearful hands, ere we had well begun
To look for shadows—even in the bright !

Yet may we charm a lesson from thy breast—
A secret wisdom from thy folds of thunder :
There is a wind that cometh from the west
Will rend thy tottering piles of gloom asunder,
And fling thee ruinous along the grass,
To sparkle on us as our footsteps pass !

FIRST came the red-eyed sun, as I did wake ;
He smote me on the temples and I rose
Casting the night aside and all its woes ;
And I would spurn my idleness and take
My own wild journey even like him, and shake
The pillars of all doubt with lusty blows,
Even like himself when his rich glory goes
Right through the stalwart fogs that part and
break.

But ere my soul was ready for the fight,
His solemn setting mocked me in the west ;
And as I trembled in the lifting night,
The white moon met me, and my heart confess'd

A mellow wisdom in her silent youth,
Which fed my hope with fear, and made my
strength a truth.

AN ANGEL saw me sitting by a brook,
Pleased with the silence and the melodies
Of wind and water which did fall and rise :
He gently stirred his plumes and from them shook
An outworn doubt, which fell on me and took
The shape of darkness, hiding all the skies,
Blinding the sun, but giving to my eyes
An inextinguishable wish to look ;
When lo ! thick as the buds of spring there came
Crowd upon crowd, informing all the sky,
A host of splendours watching silently,
With lustrous eyes that wept as if in blame,
And waying hands that crossed in lines of flame,
And signalled things I hope to hold although I die !

IS THERE a secret Joy, that may not weep,
For every flower that ends its little span ;
For every child that groweth up to man ;
For every captive bird a cage doth keep ;
For every aching eye that went to sleep
Long ages back, when other eyes began
To see and know and love as now they can,
Unravelling God's wonders heap by heap ?
Or doth the Past lie 'mid Eternity
In charnel dens that rot and reek away,
—A dismal light for those that go astray,
A pit of foul deformity—to be,
Beauty, a dreadful source of growth for thee,
When thou wouldst lift thine eyes to greet the day ?

I MISSED him when the sun began to bend ;
I found him not when I had lost his rim ;
With many tears I went in search of him,
Climbing high mountains which did still ascend,
And gave me echoes when I called my friend ;

Through cities vast and charnel-houses grim,
And high cathedrals where the light was dim,
Through books and arts and works without an end,
But found him not—the friend whom I had lost.
And yet I found him—as I found the lark,
A sound in fields I heard but could not mark ;
I found him nearest when I missed him most ;
I found him in my heart, a life in frost,
A light I knew not till my soul was dark.

THE MOON.

SHE comes ! again she comes ! the bright-eyed moon !
Under a ragged cloud I found her out,
Clasping her own dark orb like hope in doubt ;
That ragged cloud hath waited her since noon,
And he hath found and he will hide her soon !
Come, all ye little winds that sit without,
And blow the shining leaves her edge about,
And hold her fast—ye have a pleasant tune :
She will forget us in her walks at night

Among the other worlds that are so fair ;
She will forget to look on our despair ;
She will forget to be so young and bright !
Nay, gentle moon ! thou hast the keys of light—
I saw them hanging by thy girdle there.

I CAME upon a fountain on my way
When it was hot, and sat me down to drink
Its sparkling stream, when all around the brink
I spied full many vessels made of clay,
Whereon were written, not without display,
In deep engraving, or with merely ink,
The blessings which each owner seemed to think
Would light on him who drank with each alway.
I looked so hard my eyes were looking double
Into them all, but when I came to see
That they were filthy, each in his degree,
I bent my head, though not without some trouble,
To where the little waves did leap and bubble,
And so I journeyed on most pleasantly.

I SAID, I will arise and work some thing,
Nor be content with growth, but cause to grow
A life around me, clear as yes from no,
That to my restless hand some rest may bring,
And give a vital power to Action's spring :
Thus—I must cease to be, I cried ; when, lo !
An angel stood beside me on the snow,
With folded wings, that came of pondering.
“ God's glory flashes on the silence here
Beneath the moon ! ” he cried, and upward threw
His glorious eyes that swept the utmost blue,
“ Ere yet his bounding brooks run forth with cheer
To bear his message to the hidden year,
Who cometh up in haste to make his glory new.”

IN A CHURCHYARD.

THERE may be seeming calm above, but no !—
There is a pulse below which ceases not,
A subterranean working, fiery hot,
Deep in the million-hearted bosom—though

Earthquakes unlock not the prodigious show
Of elemental conflict ; and this spot
Nurses most quiet bones which lie and rot,
And here the humblest weeds take root and grow.
There is a calm upon the mighty sea,
Yet are its depths alive and full of being,
Enormous bulks that move unwieldily ;
Yet, pore we on it, they are past our seeing !—
From the deep sea-weed fields, though wide and
 ample,
Comes there no rushing sound !—*these* do not
 trample !

POWER that is not of God, however great,
Is but the downward rushing and the glare
Of a swift meteor that hath lost its share
In the one impulse which doth animate
The parent-mass—emblem to me of fate !
Which through vast nightly wastes doth onward fare,
Wild-eyed and headlong, rent away from prayer ;

A moment brilliant, then most desolate !
And O my brothers, shall we ever learn
From all the things we see continually
That pride is but the empty mockery
Of what is strong in man—not so the stern
And sweet repose of soul which we can earn
Only through reverence and humility.

DEATH.

YES, there is one who makes us all lay down
Our mushroom vanities, our speculations,
Our well set theories and calculations,
Our workman's jacket, or our monarch's crown :
To him alike the country and the town,
Barbaric hordes or civilized nations,
Men of all names and ranks and occupations,
Squire, parson, lawyer, Jones or Smith or Brown ;
He stops the carter ; the uplifted whip
Falls dreamily among the horses' straw ;

He stops the helmsman, and the gallant ship
Holdeth to westward by another law :
No one will see him, no one ever saw,
But he sees all and lets not any slip.

THAT HOLY THING.

THEY all were looking for a king
To slay their foes, and lift them high :
Thou cam'st a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.

O Son of man, to right my lot
Nought but thy presence can avail ;
Yet on the road thy wheels are not,
Nor on the sea thy sail !

My how or when thou wilt not heed,
But come down thine own secret stair,
That thou mayst answer all my need,
Yea, every by-gone prayer.

THE HERD AN' THE MAVIS.

WHAT gars ye sing, said the herd-laddie,

What gars ye sing sae lood ?

To tice them oot o' the yerd, laddie,

The worms for my daily food.

An' aye he sang, an' better he sang,

An' the worms creepit in an' oot ;

An' ane he tuik, an' twa he loot gang,

But still he carolled stoot.

It's no for the worms, sir, said the herd—

They comena for yer sang.

Think ye sae, sir ? answered the bird,

Maybe ye're no i' the wrang.

But aye &c.

Sing ye young sorrow to beguile,
Or to gie auld fear the flegs?
Na, quo' the mavis ; it's but to wile
My wee things oot o' her eggs.

An' aye &c.

The mistress is plenty for that same gear,
Though ye sangna ear' nor late.
It's to draw the deid frae the moul' sae drear,
An' open the kirkyard-gate.

Na, na ; it's a better sang nor yer ain,
Though ye hae o' notes a feck,
'At wad mak auld Barebanes there sae fain
As to lift the muckle sneck !

Better ye sing nor a burn i' the mune,
Nor a wave ower san' that flows,
Nor a win' wi' the glintin' stars abune,
An' aneth the roses in rows ;

But I'll speir ye nae mair, sir, said the herd ;

I fear what ye micht say neist.

Ye wad but won'er the mair, said the bird,

To see the thouchts i' my breist !

An' aye he sang, an' better he sang,

An' the worms creepit in an' oot ;

An' ane he tuik, an' twa he loot gang,

But still he carolled stoot.

FROM NOVALIS.

UPLIFTED is the stone,
And all mankind arisen !
We men remain thine own,
And vanished is our prison !
What bitterest grief can stay
Before thy golden cup,
When earth and life give way,
And with our Lord we sup !

To the marriage death doth call.
The maidens are not slack ;
The lamps are burning all—
Of oil there is no lack.
Afar I hear the walking
Of thy great marriage-throng !

And hark, the stars are talking
With human tone and tongue !

Courage ! for life is hasting
To endless life away ;
The inner fire, unwasting,
Transfigures our dull clay !
See the stars melting, sinking,
In life-wine, golden-bright !
We, of the splendour drinking,
Shall grow to stars of light.

Lost, lost are all our losses ;
Love set for ever free ;
The full life heaves and tosses
Like an eternal sea !
One endless living story !
One poem spread abroad !
And the sun of all our glory
Is the countenance of God.

IN THE OPEN NIGHT.

ROSE o' my hert,

Open yer leaves to the lampin' mune ;
Into the curls lat her keek an' dert ;
She'll tak the colour but gie ye tune.

Buik o' my brain,

Open yer nuiks to the starry signs ;
Lat the e'en o' the holy luik an' strain,
An' glimmer an' score 'atween the lines.

Cup o' my sowl,

Gowd an' diamond an' ruby cup,
Ye're noucht ava but a toom dry bowl
Till the wine o' the kingdom fill ye up.

Conscience-glass,

Mirror the infinite all in thee ;

Melt the bounded and make it pass

Into the tideless, shoreless sea.

World of my life,

Swing thee round thy sunny track ;

Fire and wind and water and strife—

Carry them all to the glory back.

WHAT MAN IS THERE OF YOU ?

THE homely words, how often read !

How seldom fully known !

“ Which father of you, asked for bread,
Would give his son a stone ? ”

How oft has bitter tear been shed,

And heaved how many a groan,

Because thou wouldst not give for bread

The thing that was a stone !

How oft the child thou wouldst have fed,

Thy gift away has thrown !

He prayed, thou heard'st, and gav'st the bread :

He cried, “ It is a stone ! ”

Lord, if I ask in doubt and dread
Lest I be left to moan—
I am the man who, asked for bread,
Would give his son a stone.

It would not be well
To be the organ below,
Where the folk come and go,
Said the bell—
And you never can tell
What sort of person will blow !
It is very well
Not to be the organ below !

Up here in my cell,
I swing to and fro,
Swiftly or slow,
With ring or with knell !
And it is very well
Not to stand built of pieces down below !

O WIND OF GOD.

O WIND of God, that blowest in the mind,
Blow, blow and wake the gentle spring in me ;
Blow, swifter blow, a strong warm summer wind,
Till all the flowers with eyes come out to see ;
Blow till the fruit hangs red on every tree,
And our high-soaring song-larks meet thy dove—
High the imperfect soars, descends the perfect love !

Blow not the less though winter cometh then ;
Blow, wind of God, blow hither changes keen ;
Let the spring creep into the ground again,
The flowers close all their eyes, not to be seen ;
All lives in thee that ever once hath been :
Blow, fill my upper air with icy storms ;
Breathe cold, O wind of God, and kill my canker-
worms.

THE HOME OF DEATH.

“DEATH ! whaur do ye bide, auld Death? ”

“ I bide in ilka breath,”

Quo’ Death ;

“ No i’ the pyramids,

No whaur the wormie rids,

’Neth coffin-lids ;

I biden a whaur life has been,

An’ whaur’s nae mair to be dune.”

“ Death ! whaur do ye bide, auld Death? ”

“ Wi’ the leevin’, to dee ’at’s laith,”

Quo’ Death ;

“ Wi’ the man an’ the wife

'At lo'e like life,
Bot strife ;
Wi' the bairns 'at hing to their mither,
An' a' 'at lo'e ane anither."

"Death ! whaur do ye bide, auld Death ?
"Abune an' aboot an' 'aneth,"
Quo' Death ;
"But o' a' the airts,
An' o' a' the pairts,
In herts,
Whan the tane to the tither says Na,
An' the north win' begins to blaw."

SHALL THE DEAD PRAISE THEE?

I CANNOT praise thee. By his instrument
The organ-master sits, nor moves a hand ;
For see the organ-pipes o'erthrown and bent,
Twisted and broke, like corn-stalks tempest-
fanned.

I well could praise thee for a flower, a dove ;
But not for life that is not life in me ;
Not for a being that is less than love—
A barren shoal half lifted from a sea.

And for the land whence no wind bloweth ships,
And all my living dead ones thither blown—
Rather I'd kiss no more their precious lips,
Than carry them a heart so poor and prone.

Yet I do bless thee thou art what thou art, .

That thou dost know thyself what thou dost
know—

A perfect, simple, tender, rhythmic heart,
Beating thy blood to all in bounteous flow.

And I can bless thee too for every smart,
For every disappointment, ache, and fear ;
For every hook thou fixest in my heart,
For every burning cord that draws me near.

But prayer these wake, not song. Thyself I crave.

Come thou, or all thy gifts away I fling.

Thou silent, I am but an empty grave :

Think to me, father, and I am a king.

Then, like the wind-stirred bones, my pipes shall
quake ;

The air burst, as from burning house the blaze ;
And swift contending harmonies shall shake

Thy windows with a storm of jubilant praise.

Thee praised, I haste me humble to my own—
Then love not shame shall bow me at their feet,
Then first and only to my stature grown,
Fulfilled of love, a servant all-complete.

I HAVE a fellowship with every shade
Of changing nature ;—with the tempest hour
My soul goes forth to claim her early dower
Of living pryncedom, and her wings have stayed
Amidst the wildest uproar undismayed ;—
Yet she hath often owned a better power,
And blessed the gentle coming of the shower—
The speechless majesty of love arrayed
In lowly virtue, under which disguise
Full many a princely thing hath passed her by ;
And she from homely intercourse of eyes
Hath gathered visions wider than the sky,
And seen the withered heart of man arise
Peaceful as God and full of majesty.

A YEAR SONG.

SIGHING above,
Rustling below,
Through the woods
The winds go.
Beneath, dead crowds ;
Above, life bare ;
And the besom winds
Sweep the air.

*Heart, leave thy woe ;
Let the dead things go.*

Through the brown leaves
Gold stars push ;
A mist of green
Veils the bush.

Here a twitter,
There a croak !
They are coming—
The spring-folk !

*Heart, be not dumb ;
Let the live things come.*

Through the beech
The winds go,
With a long speech,
Loud and slow.

The grass is fine,
And soft to lie in ;
The sun doth shine
The blue sky in.

*Heart, be alive ;
Let the new things thrive.*

Round again !
Here now—

A rimy fruit

On a bare bough !

There the winter,

And the snow ;

And a sighing ever

To fall and go !

Heart, thy hour shall be ;

Thy dead will comfort thee.

TRIOLET.

I'm a puir man, I grant,

But I am weel neeboured ;

And nane shall me daunt,

Though a puir man, I grant,

For I shall not want—

The Lord is my Shepherd.

I'm a puir man, I grant,

But I am weel neeboured.

WIN' THAT BLAWS.

WIN' that blaws the simmer plaid
Ower the hie hill's shooters laid,
Green wi' gerse, an' reid wi' heather,
Welcome wi' yer sowl-like weather !
Mony a win' there has been sent
Oot 'aneth the firmament ;
• Ilka ane its story has ;
Ilka ane began an' was ;
Ilka ane fell quaiet an' mute
Whan its angel wark was oot.
First gaed ane oot throu the mirk,
Whan the maker gan to work ;
Ower it gaed an' ower the sea,
An' the warl' begud to be.
Mony ane has come an' gane
Sin' the time there was but ane :

Ane was grit an' strang, an' rent
Rocks an' muntains as it went
Afore the Lord, his trumpeter,
Waukin' up the prophet's ear ;
Ane was like a steppin' soon'
I' the mulberry taps abune—
Them the Lord's ain steps did swing,
Walkin' on afore his king ;
Ane lay doon like scoldit pup
At his feet, an' gatna up—
Whan the word the Maister spak
Drave the wull-cat billows back ;
Ane gaed frae his lips, an' dang
To the yird the sodger thrang ;
Ane comes frae his hert to mine
Ilka day to mak it fine.
Breath o' God, eh ! come an' blaw
Frae my hert ilk fog awa' ;
Wauk me up, an' mak me strang,
Fill my hert wi' mony a sang,

Frae my lips again to stert,
Fillin' sails o' mony a hert,
Blawin' them ower seas dividin'
To the only place to bide in.

SONG.

WHY do the houses stand
When they that built them are gone?
When remaineth even of one
That there lived and loved and planned
Not a face, not an eye, not a hand—
Only here and there a bone?

Why do the houses stand
When they who built them are gone?
Oft in the moonlighted land,
When the day is overblown,
With happy memorial moan,
Sweet ghosts in a loving band
Roam through the houses that stand—
For the builders are not gone.

FOR WHERE YOUR
TREASURE IS, THERE WILL
YOUR HEART BE ALSO.

THE miser lay on his lonely bed ;
Life's candle was burning dim.
His heart in his iron chest was hid
Under heaps of gold and an iron lid ;
And whether it were alive or dead,
It never troubled him.

Slowly out of his body he crept.
He said, " I am just the same !
"Only I want my heart in my breast ;
I will go and fetch it out of the chest."
Thorough the dark like a gloom he leapt—
He was dead, but had no shame !

He opened the lid—oh, hell and night !

Ghost-eyes could not see the gold !

Empty and swept ! Not a gleam was there !

His heart lay alone in the chest so bare !

Ghost-hands felt nothing—they had no might

To finger and clasp and hold !

But his heart he saw, and at it did clutch.

—A heart, or a puff-ball of sin ?

Eaten with moths, and fretted with rust,

He grasped a handful of dry-rotted dust !

He shrieked, as ghosts may, at the crumbling
touch,

But hid it his breast within.

And some there are who can see him sit

Under the church apart,

Counting what seems to him rounds of gold,

Heap upon heap, on the dank death-mould :

Alas, poor ghost ! how he lacks of wit !—

They breed in the dust of his heart !

Another miser has his chest,
And it hoards of wealth yet more ;
Like ferrets his hands go in and out,
Burrowing, tossing the gold about ;
And *his* heart too is out of his breast,
The cold heap's bloodless core !

Now wherein differ the ghost that sits
And counts ghost-coins all day,
And the man that clings with spirit prone
To that which could never be his own,
Till out of the world with nothing he flits
But a heart all eaten away ?

THE ASTHMATIC MAN TO
THE SATAN THAT BINDS
HIM.

SATAN, avaunt !

Nay, take thine hour ;

Thou canst not daunt,

Thou hast no power ;

Be welcome to thy nest,

Though it be in my breast.

Burrow amain ;

Dig like a mole ;

Fill every vein

With half-burnt coal ;

Puff the keen dust about,

And all to choke me out.

Fill music's ways
 With creaking cries,
That no loud praise
 May climb the skies ;
And on my labouring chest
Lay mountains of unrest.

My slumber steep
 In dreams of haste,
That only sleep,
 No rest I taste—
With stiflings, rimes of rote,
 And fingers on the throat.

Satan, thy might
 I do defy ;
Live core of night,
 I patient lie :
A wind comes up the gray
Will blow thee clean away.

Christ's angel, death,
All radiant white,
With one cold breath
Will scare thee quite ;
And give my lungs an air
As fresh as answered prayer.

So, Satan, do
Thy worst with me
Until the True
Shall set me free,
And end what he began,
By making me a man.

A SONG OF HOPE.

I DINNA ken what's come ower me !

There's a how whaur ance was a hert !

I never luik oot afore me,

An' a cry winna gar me stert ;

There's naething nae mair to come ower me,

Blaw the win' frae ony airt !

For i' yon kirkyaird there's a hillock,

A hert whaur ance was a how ;

An' o' joy there's no left a mealock—

Deid aiss whaur ance was a low !

For i' yon kirkyaird, i' the hillock,

Lies a seed 'at winna grow.

It's my hert 'at hauds up the wee hillie—

That's hoo there's a how i' my breist ;

It's awa' doon there wi' my Willie,

Gaed wi' him whan he was releast ;

It's doon i' the green-grown hillie,

But I s' be efter it neist !

Come awa', nichts an' mornin's,

Come ooks, years, a' time's clan ;

Ye're walcome ayont ony scornin' ;

Tak me til him as fest as ye can.

Come awa', nichts an' mornin's,

Ye are wings o' a mighty span !

For I ken he's luikin' an' waitin',

Luikin' aye doon as I clim' :

Wad I hae him see me sit greitin',

I'stead o' gaein' to him ?

I'll step oot like ane sure o' a meetin',

I'll traivel an' rin to him.

THE BURNIE.

THE water ran doon frae the heich hope-heid,

Wi' a Rin, burnie, rin ;

It wimpled, an' waggled, an' sang a screed

O' nonsense, an' wadna blin,

Wi' its Rin, burnie, rin.

Frae the hert o' the warl', wi' a swirl an' a sway,

An' a Rin, burnie, rin,

That water lap clear frae the dark til the day,

An' singin' awa' did spin,

Wi' its Rin, burnie, rin.

Ae wee bit mile frae the heich hope-heid,

Wi' a Rin, burnie, rin,

'Mang her yows an' her lambs the herd-lassie stude,

An' she loot a tear fa' in,

Wi' a Rin, burnie, rin.

Frae the hert o' the maiden that tear-drap rase,

Wi' a Rin, burnie, rin ;

Wearily clim'in' up narrow ways,

There was but a drap to fa' in,

Sae slow did that burnie rin.

Twa wee bit miles frae the heich hope-heid,

Wi' a Rin, burnie, rin,

Doon creepit a cowerin' streakie o' reid,

An' meltit awa' within,

Wi' a Rin, burnie, rin.

Frae the hert o' a youth cam the tricklin' reid,

Wi' its Rin, burnie, rin ;

It ran an' ran till it left him deid,

An' syne it dried up i' the win',

An' that burnie nae mair did rin.

Whan the wimplin' burn that frae three herts gaed

Wi' a Rin, burnie, rin,

Cam to the lip o' the sea sae braid,

It curled an' grued wi' pain o' sin—

But it took that burnie in.

SONG-SERMON.

LORD, what is man

That thou art mindful of him !

Though in creation's van,

Lord, what is man !

He wills less than he can,

Lets his ideal scoff him !

Lord, what is man

That thou art mindful of him !

SHADOWS.

ALL things are shadows of thee, Lord ;
The sun himself is but thy shade ;
My spirit is the shadow of thy word,
Thy candle, sun-bedayed !

Diamonds are shadows of the sun ;
They gleam as after him they hark :
My soul some arrows of thy light hath won,
And round me slays the dark !

All knowledge is but broken shades—
In gulfs of dark a wandering horde :
Together rush the parted glory-grades—
And, lo, thy garment, Lord !

My soul, the shadow, still is light,
Because the shadow falls from thee ;
I turn, dull candle, to the centre bright,
And home flit shadowy.

Shine, shine ; make me thy shadow still—
The brighter still the more thy shade ;
My motion be thy lovely moveless will !
My darkness, light delayed !

A WINTER PRAYER.

COME through the gloom of clouded skies,
The slow dim rain and fog athwart ;
Through east winds keen with wrong and lies,
Come and lift up my hopeless heart.

Come through the sickness and the pain,
The sore unrest that tosses still ;
Through aching dark that hides the gain,
Come and arouse my fainting will.

Come through the prate of foolish words,
The science with no God behind ;
Through all the pangs of untuned chords,
Speak wisdom to my shaken mind.

Through all the fears that spirits bow—
Of what hath been, or may befall,
Come down and talk with me, for thou
Canst tell me all about them all.

Lord, hear my sad, lone heart entreat—
Thou heart of joy, below, above !
One minute let me kiss thy feet,
And name the names of those I love.

SONG OF A POOR PILGRIM.

ROSES all the rosy way,
Roses to the rosier west,
Where the roses of the day
Cling to night's unrosy breast !

Thou who mak'st the roses, why
Give to every leaf a thorn ?
On thy highway here am I,
Feet and hands and spirit torn !

Pardon, Lord ! full well I know
These same thorns that make me fret :
Down to help us homeward, lo !
Thy untwisted crown is let.

Oft upon the pathway rough,
 Sheep-track steep up to thy fold,
In my hands the flowers came off,
 But the thorns did keep their hold,

Out of darkness light is born :
 Out of weakness make me strong
For the day when every thorn
 Breaks into a rose of song.

Like a sparrow sits thy bird,
 Chirping on the house-top dark ;
Up when comes my morning third,
 I shall mount, that morning's lark—

Roses, roses all my song !
 Roses in a gorgeous feast !
Roses in a royal throng,
 Surging, rosing from the east !

AN EVENING PRAYER.

I AM a bubble

Upon thy ever moving, resting sea :

Oh, rest me now from tossing, trespass, trouble ;

Take me down into thee.

Give me thy peace :

My heart is aching with unquietness ;

Oh, make its inharmonious beating cease ;

Thy hand upon it press.

My sun ! my day !

Swift night and day betwixt, my world doth reel ;

Potter, take not thy hand from off the clay

That whirls upon thy wheel.

O heart ! I cry

For love and life, pardon and hope and strength ;

O father, am I thine ?—I shall not die—

But I shall sleep at length.

SONG-SERMON.

TRIOLET.

MERCY to thee, O Lord, belongs,

For as his work thou giv'st the man.

From us, not thee, come all our wrongs ;

Mercy to thee, O Lord, belongs :

With small-cord whips and scorpion thongs

Thou lay'st on every ill thy ban.

Mercy to thee, O Lord, belongs,

For as his work thou giv'st the man.

A DREAM-SONG.

THE stars are spinning their threads,
And the clouds are the dust that flies,
And the suns are weaving them up
For the time when the sleepers shall rise.

The ocean in music rolls,
And gems are turning to eyes,
And the trees are gathering souls
For the time when the sleepers shall rise.

The weepers are learning to smile,
And laughter to glean the sighs,
And burn and bury the care and guile
For the day when the sleepers shall rise.

Oh, the dews and the moths and the daisy-red,
The larks and the glimmers and flows !
The lilies and sparrows and daily bread,
And the something that nobody knows !

SONG.

SPRING sits on her nest—
Daisies and white clover ;
And young love lies at rest
In the Spring's white nest ;
For she loves me best,
And the cold is over :
Spring sits on her nest,
Daisies and white clover.

CHRISTMAS, 1880.

GREAT-HEARTED child, thy very being *The Son!*

Thou know'st the hearts of all us prodigals ;

For who is prodigal but him who has gone

Far from the true to heart it with the false?

And who but thee, that, from the animals',

Know'st all the hearts, up to the Father's own,

Can tell what it would be to be alone !

Alone ! No father !—At the very thought,

Thou, the eternal light, wast once aghast ;

A death in death for thee it almost wrought !

How thou didst haste, about to breathe thy last,

To call out *father* ere thy spirit passed !

Exhausted in fulfilling no hard vow,

But doing his will who greater is than thou.

That we might know him, thou didst come and live;
That we might find him, thou to him didst die;
The son-heart, brother, thy son-being give—
We too would love the father perfectly,
And to his bosom go back with the cry,
Father, into thy hands I give the heart
Which left thee but to learn how good thou art.

There are but two in all the universe—
The father and his children—not a third ;
Nor, all the weary time, fell any curse—
Not once dropped from its nest a fledgling bird,
Never old sorrow in young bosom stirred,
But a love-pull it was upon the chain
That draws the children to the father again.

O Jesus Christ, babe, man, eternal son !
Take pity: we are poor where thou art rich
Our hearts are small, and yet there is not one
In all the sad and noisy nursery, which,

Merry or mourning in its narrow niche,
Needs not the Father's heart this very now,
With all his being's being, even as thou.

RONDEL.

I DO not know thy final will,
It is too good for me to know :
Thou willest that I mercy show,
That I take heed and do no ill,
That I the needy's cup should fill,
Nor stones at any sinner throw ;
But I know not thy final will—
It is too good for me to know.

I know thy love unspeakable—
For love's own sake thou sendest woe ;
To find thine own thou lost wilt go,
Thy being for thine own wilt spill :—
How should I know thy final will,
Godwise too good for me to know.

THE SPARROW.

O LORD, I cannot but believe
The birds do sing thy praises when they sing to
one another ;
And they are but lying fallow when the winter
makes them grieve :
They but gather singing things for the summer to
unsmother !

If thou hadst finished me, O Lord,
Not left out a part in me of the gift that goes to
singing,
Then I had known the meaning of the birds' song-
word—
Should know upon what thoughts they their
pearly talk were stringing.

I then should read the wisdom hid
In the storm-inspired song of thy thrush's bosom
solemn ;

And I should understand what thy free spirit did
To make the lark-soprano mount like geyser-
column.

I think I almost understand
Thy owl, his muffled swiftness, moon-round eyes,
and intoned hooting ;
I think I could myself be a night-owl in the land,
With notes of yellow moon, day-dreamers all con-
futing.

But among thy creatures that do sing,
I of them all am likest to the housetop-haunting
sparrow,

That flies short flights on a dumpy, fluttering
wing,

And chirps thy praises from a throat that's very
short and narrow.

But if thy sparrow praise thee well,
By singing well thy song, nor letting noisy traffic
quell it,
It may be that in some high, leafy, heavenly dell,
He may wake with a trumpet throat and a trumpet
song to swell it.

DECEMBER 23, 1879.

I.

A THOUSAND houses of poesy stand round me
everywhere ;

They are on the earth and in my thought and in
and above the air ;

But to-night they have no doors, no shining
windows fair,

And I am left in the desert with an aching as of
care.

II.

Cannot I break some little nut and get at the
poetry in it ?

Cannot I break the shining egg of some all but
hatched heavenly linnet ?

Cannot I find some beauty-worm, and its moony
cocoon-silk spin it ?

Cannot I find my all but lost day in the rich
content of a minute ?

III.

I will sit me down, aching and tired, in the midst
of this never-unclosing
Of doors or windows that makes it look as if truth
herself were dozing ;
I will sit me down and make me a tent, call it
poeting or prosing,
Of what things are in my reach, the things at my
poor disposing.

IV.

No ; I will not ; I'll do better : I will sit quiet and
say :
“ Lo ! I myself am a house of poetry solemn and
gay ;
Only the windows are shut, all shut—'tis a cold
and foggy day ;
And I have not light to see what is in me the same
always !

V.

No ; I will say rather : “ I am a nut, in the hard
and frozen ground ;

And above is the damp and frozen air, and the
cold blue sky all round ;

And the power of a leafy and branchy tree is in
me crushed and bound,

Till the summer come and loose it from the grave-
clothes in which it is wound !

VI.

No ; I will not say that, for here is better and
best :

I am lying a voiceless, featherless thing in God’s
own perfect nest ;

And the voice and the song together are growing
within my breast,

And his wings are spread wide round me, for the
sun is down in the west.

VII.

Doors and windows, and tents, and winter, and
eggs, and seeds,

Ye shall all be opened and broken, spread out and
voiced to my needs ;

On the will of the Father all lovely things are
strung like a string of beads,

To give to the willing child that the will of the
Father heeds.

SONG-PRAYER.

AFTER KING DAVID.

I SHALL be satisfied

With the seeing of thy face.

When I awake, wide-eyed,

I shall be satisfied

With what this life did hide,

The one supernal grace !

I shall be satisfied

With the seeing of thy face.

DECEMBER 27, 1879.

EVERY time would have its song
If the heart were right ;
For love all-perfect, tender, strong,
Is over day and night.

Weary drop the hands of prayer,
Calling out for peace ;
Love it is that everywhere
Sings and does not cease ;

Fear, the slave, through all the night,
Silent peers about ;
Love comes singing with a light,
And doth cast him out.

Hate and fear and wrath and doubt

Never try to sing ;

If they did, oh, what a rout

Of groans our ears would sting !

Pride indeed will sometimes try,

For the finer speech,

But his best is but a high,

Horrid peacock-screech.

Greed will also sometimes try—

Joy he would not stunt ;—

What can issue from his sty

But a swinish grunt ?

Hope, though, has a little note

Now and then to pipe ;

Piping like the feeble throat

Of a bird not ripe.

And when something has been wrong,
 Grief can sing one word—
 In a sad, small, troubled song,
I am sorry, Lord.

But if we were always good,
 On the cloudiest day
 Find some little song we should,
 Or to sing or say.

For great Love is everywhere
 Watching over all,
 Over birds high up in air,
 Over birds that fall.

And of songs ascending sheer,
Father! is the fleetest ;
 To the ever open ear,
Father! is the sweetest.

All that's needed to be able
Every day to sing,
Is the story of the stable—
Of the lowly king.

From the stable to the sky,
Through the great and small,
Infinitely deep and high,
Love is lord of all.

Therefore, piping sad and low,
Piping loud and clear,
I will sing as it will go,
Every day in the year.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1879.

A DIM, vague shrinking haunts my soul,

My spirit bodes some ill—

As if some far-off sheltering mole

Had fallen, and let the waters roll

All round my grassy hill ;

As if I had no fire within

For thoughts to sit about ;

As if I had no wheel to spin,

No lamp to lure the good things in,

And keep the bad things out.

The south-west raves among the pines

That guard my cottage round ;

The sea-waves fall in stormy lines
Below the sandy cliffs and chines,
And swell the roaring sound.

The misty air, that roaring wind
Not often trouble me ;
The storm that's outside of the mind
Full often wakes me up to find
Great peace and liberty.

Why is not this my fate to-night?
Chance is not lord of things ;
I were a poor and hapless wight,
If things just be or not be might—
Chaotic wallowings !

The man of moods would merely say,
As by the fire he sat,
“ I am low-spirited to-day—

I must do something, work, or play,
Lest care should kill the cat."

Not such my saw ; I was not meant
To be the sport of things ;
This has a meaning—it is sent ;
And my dull heart is humbly bent
To know the thing it means.

This need of shelter round about,
This restlessness of heart,
Reveal what a poor child of doubt
I were, exposed to scoff and flout,
To windy flaw and start,

If I did stand a mind alone,
Centre of things and thoughts ;
A thinker in a box of bone,
A king upon a landless throne,
A sun eat up of blots !

A being without power to be,
Or any power to cease ;
Whom objects but compelled to see,
Whose quiet was but a windless sea,
No enemy, his peace !

This causeless sadness makes me think
How readily I might
Be driven to reason's farthest brink,
Then over it, and sudden sink
In ghastly waves of night.

It makes me think that when I'm glad,
And feeling well and strong,
But for thy bliss I should be sad,
But for thy reason should be mad,
But for thy right be wrong.

Around me is no empty waste,
No lordless host of things ;

For I am borne of one at rest,
Borne, and lean trusting on a breast,
Round watched with ministerings.

'Tis this, this only makes me safe—
I am, immediate,
Of one that lives ; I am no waif
That haggard waters toss and chafe,
But of a royal fate ;

The born child of a power that lives
Because it will and can ;
A love whose gentlest motion gives,
A spirit free that ever strives
To glorify his man,

I live not on the circling air,
Or on my daily food ;
I live not even by thinkings fair,

I hold my very being there
Where God thinks at his good.

Because God lives I live ; because
He thinks, I also think ;
I am dependent on no laws,
Immediately and without pause
His life I breathe, I drink.

Right careful will my Father watch
To make the most of me ;
That what is mine may truly match
With his, nor be a blackened patch
Upon his radiancy.

The man that lives he knows not how
May well fear any mouse ;
I should be trembling this same now
If I did think, my Father, thou
Wast nowhere in the house.

Oh ! draw my spirit close to thee,
And let me feel thy clasp ;
I talk to thee—think thou to me ;
Then welcome in the whole great sea !
I shall not even gasp.

SONG-SERMON.

IN his arms thy silly lamb
Lo he gathers to his breast !
See, thou sadly bleating dam,
See him lift thy silly lamb !
Hear it cry, “ How blest I am !
Here is love, and love is rest ! ”
In his arms thy silly lamb
See him gather to his breast !

THE DONKEY IN THE CART TO THE HORSE IN THE CARRIAGE.

I.

I SAY ! hey ! cousin there ! I mustn't call you
brother !

But you've got a tail behind you, and I've got
another ;

You pull, and I pull, though we don't pull together ;
And if you have less hardship, I have more weather.

II.

Your legs are long, mine are short ; I am lean,
you are fatter ;

Your step is bold and free, mine goes pitter-patter ;
Your head is in the air, and mine hangs down like
lead—

But then my two great ears are so heavy on my
head !

III.

You need not whisk your tail, nor turn away
your nose ;

Poor donkeys ain't so stupid as rich horses may
suppose !

I could feed in any manger just as well as
you—

Though I don't despise a thistle with sauce of
dust and dew.

IV.

T'other day a bishop's cob stopped beside me in
a lane,

With a tail as broad as oil-cake, and a close-clipped
hoggy mane ;

I stood sideways to the hedge, but he did not
want to pass,

And he was so full of corn he did not care about
the grass.

V.

Quoth the cob, "You're a donkey of a most
peculiar breed !

You've just eaten up a thistle that was going fast
to seed !

If you had but saved and sown the seeds, you
might have had a crop ;

There's not another near you, and now you have
to stop ! "

VI.

I told him I was hungry — not another thistle
near ;

I used the thing I had—for the rest had little
fear.

Said the cob, "I ought to know what counsel is
the best ;

I have more to eat than you, and longer time to
rest.

VII.

“ Why don’t you take it easy? You are working
much too hard !

Retire, retire, I pray you—it is quite upon the
card.

Have pity on your friends: you think your work
delectable !

But believe me—such a cart—excuse me—’s not
respectable.”

VIII.

Said I, “ I thank you for your counsel; I think
I’d take it really,

If you’d spare me half a feed out of your four
feeds daily.”

He tossed his head at that: “ Now don’t be
cheeky ! ” said he ;

“ When I am very fat, I’ll think of you : keep
steady.”

IX.

Good bye, good bye ! I see that you are just such
another !

Why, now I look at you, you are his very
brother !

Yes, thank you for your kick ; it was all that you
could spare !

For to be sure they clip and singe you very, very
bare.

X.

Good bye ! for I must trot along 'twixt the shafts
where I am put,

Nor look round to see my cart, but set foremost
my best foot.

My cart *is* rather rickety, and the axle sore wants
oil ;

But I always rest at night with the rest that comes
of toil.

XI.

And perhaps you would not think it, but in my
cart behind

There's neither dirt nor rubbish, nor bags of gold
or wind ;

But there's water and there's wine, and corn and
mustard-seed,

And 'a good can of milk, and some honey too,
indeed.

XII.

“That's all very fine—to wag your ears and
parley,

Pretending to despise my bellyfuls of barley !

But what with blows and starving, and labour
overhard,

As sure as spurs we'll see you soon down in the
knacker's yard ! ”

XIII.

Few blows—a little hay—and of water many a
draught !

I tell you he's no coster that sits upon my shaft !
And for the knacker's yard—that's not my destined
bed !

Please let me know when next you see a donkey
lying dead.



STRAIT is the path ? ah then, we may not
roam !

No ; for it leads us straight into a star-wide home.

COTTAGE SONGS FOR COTTAGE CHILDREN.

I.—BY THE CRADLE.

CLOSE its eyes : it must not peep ;

Drop its fists ; its fingers slack ;

Slide away far into sleep—

Sis will watch till it comes back.

Mother's knitting at the door,

Waiting till the kettle sings ;

When the kettle's song is o'er,

She will set the bright tea-things.

Father's busy making hay

In the meadow by the brook ;

Not so very far away—

Close its peeps, it needn't look !

God is here, and God is there—

Sees the great scythe glitter and rip ;

Watches baby gone somewhere ;

Sees the mother's fingers trip.

Sleep, dear baby ; sleep outright :

Mother's sitting just behind ;

Father's only out of sight ;

God is round us like the wind.

II.—SWEEPING THE FLOOR.

SWEEP and sweep and sweep the floor ;

Sweep the dust, pick up the pin ;

Make it clean from fire to door,

Clean for father to come in.

Mother said that God goes sweeping—

Looking, sweeping, with a broom,

All the time that we are sleeping,

For a shilling in a room.

Did he drop it out of glory,
Walking far above the birds ?
Or did mother make the story
To set me thinking afterwards ?

If I was the swept-for shilling,
I would hearken through the gloom ;
Roll out fast, and fall down willing,
Right before the sweeping broom.

III.—WASHING THE CLOTHES.

THIS is the way we wash the clothes !
See the dirt and smoke and clay :
Through and through the water flows,
Takes and drops them far away.

This is the way we bleach the clothes :
Lay them out upon the green ;
Through and through the sunshine goes—
Makes them white as well as clean.

This is the way we dry the clothes :
Hang them on the bushes about ;
Through and through the soft wind blows,
Draws and drives the wetness out.

Water, sun, and windy air,
Make the clothes all clean and sweet !
Lay them now in lavender,
For the Sunday, folded neat.

IV.—DRAWING WATER.

DARK, as if it would not tell,
Lies the water, still and cool :
Dip the bucket in the well,
Lift it from the secret pool.

Up it comes all brown and dim,
Telling of the darkness sweet :
As it rises to the brim—
See the sun and water meet !

See the friends each other hail !

“ Here you are ! ” exclaims the sun ;
The water splashes from the pail—
Joy has made it wild with fun !

You have many a tale to tell :—

Water, while I take you home,
Tell me of the hidden well
Whence you, first of all, did come.

You have kept a little taste,

Through the distance and the strife,
Narrow veins and open waste,
Of the lovely well of life :

Could you lead me back the way ?

Through the earth, the sea, the sky,
Bring me thither?—Happy day !
I would drink, and never die.

Jesus sits upon the brink

All the world's great thirst to slake,
Offering every one to drink,
Who will only come and take.

Lord of wells and waters all,

In the heart, or in the meads,
Unto thee my soul doth call
For the something that it needs.

Give me water in my heart,

Flowing ever with a song,
Bathing it in every part,
Till its cleanness make it strong.

Come, sweet water ! I can tell

You will make the cottage shine ;
Come, O water, from His well,
Thou wilt make my soul divine.

V.—CLEANING THE WINDOWS.

WASH the window ; rub it dry ;

Make the ray-door clean and bright :

He who lords it in the sky

Will on cottage-floors alight.

Looking over sea and beck,

Mountain, vale, and orchard-bloom,

He can see the smallest speck

Anywhere about the room.

See how bright his torch is blazing

In the heart of mother's store !

But I never saw him gazing

So into the press before !

Ah, I see !—the pane of wood

In the window, dull and dead,

Father took away for good,

And a glass one put instead !

What a difference it makes !

How it melts the filmy gloom !

What a little more it takes

Much to brighten up the room !

There I spy a dusty streak !

There a spot of mouldy green !

There a cobweb !—Ah, the sneak !

See the spider watching keen !

Lord of suns and men that see,

In my heart come down and glow ;

Leave no darksome spot in me

Where thou dost not shining go.

I must keep the windows bright

Of my soul and mind and heart,

That the lovely Light of light

Shine into my deepest part.

If I should forget, and fail
Wide the sky-door thus to set,
Send thy rain and lashing hail,
Let me know that I forget.

I shall hear them on the pane,
Rise and to my window dart :
When thy morning dawns again,
Thou wilt shine into my heart.

THE WIND AND THE MOON.

SAID the Wind to the Moon, “ I will blow you out.

You stare

In the air

Like a ghost in a chair,

Always looking what I am about :

I hate to be watched ; I will blow you out. ’

The Wind blew hard, and out went the Moon.

So, deep

On a heap

Of clouds, to sleep,

Down lay the Wind, and slumbered soon—

Muttering low, “ I’ve done for that Moon ! ”

He turned in his bed : she was there again !

On high

In the sky,

With her one ghost eye,

The Moon shone white and alive and plain.

Said the Wind—" I will blow you out again."

The Wind blew hard, and the Moon grew dim.

" With my sledge

And my wedge

I have knocked off her edge !

If only I blow right fierce and grim,

The creature will soon be dimmer than dim."

He blew and he blew, and she thinned to a thread.

" One puff

More's enough

To blow her to snuff !

One good puff more where the last was bred,

And glimmer, glimmer, glum will go the thread !"

He blew a great blast, and the thread was gone ;

In the air

Nowhere

Was a moonbeam bare ;

Far off and harmless the shy stars shone :

Sure and certain the Moon was gone !

The Wind he took to his revels once more ;

On down,

In town,

Like a merry-mad clown,

He leaped and holloed with whistle and roar.

“What’s that?” The glimmering thread once more !

He flew in a rage—he danced and blew ;

But in vain

Was the pain

Of his bursting brain ;

For still the broader the moon-scap grew,

The broader he swelled his big cheeks and blew.

Slowly she grew—till she filled the night,

And shone

On her throne

In the sky alone,

A matchless, wonderful, silvery light,

Radiant and lovely, the queen of the night.

Said the Wind—"What a marvel of power am I!

With my breath,

Good faith!

I blew her to death—

First blew her away right out of the sky—

Then blew her in : what a strength am I !"

But the moon she knew nothing about the affair ;

For, high

In the sky,

With her one white eye,

Motionless miles above the air,

She never had heard the great Wind blare.

THE FOOLISH HAREBELL.

A HAREBELL hung its wilful head :

“ I am tired, so tired ! I wish I was dead.”

She hung her head in the mossy dell :

“ If all were over, then all were well ! ”

The wind he heard, and was pitiful ;

He waved her about to make her cool.

“ Wind, you are rough,” said the dainty bell ;

“ Leave me alone—I am not well.”

And the wind at the voice of the drooping dame,

Sank in his heart, and ceased for shame.

“I am hot, so hot !” she sighed and said ;

“I am withering up ; I wish I was dead.”

Then the sun he pitied her pitiful case,

And drew a thick veil over his face.

“Cloud, go away, and don’t be rude ;

I am not—I don’t see why you should.”

The cloud withdrew ; and the harebell cried,

“I am faint, so faint ! and no water beside !”

And the dew came down its millionfold path ;

But she murmured, “I did not want a bath.”

A boy came by in the morning gray ;

He plucked the harebell, and threw it away.

The harebell shivered, and cried, “Oh ! oh !

I am faint, so faint ! Come, dear wind, blow.

The wind blew softly, and did not speak.
She thanked him kindly, but grew more weak.

“Sun, dear sun, I am cold,” she said.
He rose ; but lower she drooped her head.

“O rain, I am withering ; all the blue
Is fading out of me ;—come, please do.”

The rain came down as fast as it could,
But for all its will, it did her no good.

She shuddered and shrivelled, and moaning said
“Thank you all kindly ;” and then she was dead.

Let us hope, let us hope, when she comes next
year,

She'll be simple and sweet. But I fear, I fear !

SONG.

THREE TRIOLETS.

I WAS very cold

 In the summer weather ;

The sun shone all his gold,

But I was very cold—

Alas, we were grown old,

 Love and I together !—

Oh, but I was cold

 In the summer weather !

Sudden I grew warmer,

 When the brooks were frozen :—

“To be angry is to harm her,”

I said, and straight grew warmer ;

“ Better men, the charmer
Knows at least a dozen ! ”—
I said, and straight grew warmer,
Though the brooks were frozen.

Spring sits on her nest—
Daisies and white clover ;
And my heart at rest
Lies in the spring’s young nest :
My love she loves me best,
And the frost is over !
Spring sits on her nest—
Daisies and white clover !

AN IMPROVISATION.

THE stars cleave the sky.

Yet for us they rest,

And their race-course high

Is a shining nest !

The hours hurry on.

But where is thy flight,

Soft pavilion

Of motionless night ?

Earth gives up her trees

To the holy air ;

They live in the breeze ;

They are saints at prayer !

Summer night, come from God,
On your beauty, I see,
A still wave has flowed
Of eternity !

No bird can sing in tune but that the Lord
Sits throned in equity above the heaven,
And holds the righteous balance always even ;
No heart to love will true response afford
Wherein from one to eight not every chord
Has been attuned by the spirits seven ;
For every bird sings tuneful that the Lord
Is throned in equity above high heaven.

Oh heart, by wrong unfilial scathed and scored,
And from thy humble throne with mazedness driven,
Take courage : when thy wrongs thou hast forgiven,
Thy rights in love thy God will see restored :
No bird could sing in tune but that the Lord
Sits throned in equity above the heaven.

THE CONSOLER.*

I.

WHAT human form is this? what form divine?
And who are these that gaze upon his face,
Mild, beautiful, and full of heavenly grace,
With whose reflected light the gazers shine?
Saviour, who does not know it to be thine?
Who does not long to fill the gazers' place?
And yet there is no time, there is no space,
To keep away thy servants from thy shrine.
Here if we kneel, and watch with faithful eyes,
Thou art not too far for faithful eyes to see,
Thou art not too far to turn and look on me,
To speak to me, and to receive my sighs.
Therefore for ever I forget the skies,
And find an everlasting Sun in thee.

* Written on the back of an engraving of Scheffer's *Christus Consolator*.

II.

Oh never let us leave that happy throng !
From that low attitude of love not cease !
In all the world there is no other peace,
In all the world no other shield from wrong.
But chiefly, Saviour, for thy feet we long—
For no vain quiet, for no pride's increase—
But that, being weak, and Thou divinely strong,
Us from our hateful selves thou mayst release.
We wander from thy fold's free holy air,
Forget thy looks and take our fill of sin !
But if thou keep us evermore within,
We never surely can forget thee there,
Breathing thy breath, thy white robe given to wear,
And loving thee for all thou diedst to win !

III.

To speak of him in language of our own,
Is not for us too daringly to try ;
But, Saviour, we can read thy history
Upon the faces round thy humble throne ;
And as the flower among the grass makes known
What summer suns have warmed it from the sky,
As every human smile and human sigh
Is witness that we do not live alone,
So in that company—in those sweet tears,
The first-born of a rugged melted heart,
In those gaunt chains, for ever torn apart,
And in the words that weeping mother hears,
We read the story of two thousand years,
And know thee somewhat, Saviour, as thou art.

TO —

I CANNOT write old verses here,
Dead things a thousand years away,
When all the life of the young year
Is in the summer day.

The roses make the world so sweet,
The bees, the birds have such a tune,
There's such a light and such a heat,
And such a joy this June,

One must expand one's heart with praise,
And make the memory secure
Of sunshine and the woodland days
And summer twilights pure.

Oh listen rather. Nature's song
Comes from the waters, beating tides,
Green-margined rivers, and the throng
Of streams on mountain-sides.

So fair those water-spirits are,
Such happy strength their music fills,
Our joy shall be to wander far,
And find them on the hills.

TO A SISTER.

A FRESH young voice that sings to me
So often many a simple thing,
Should surely not unanswered be,
By all that I can sing.

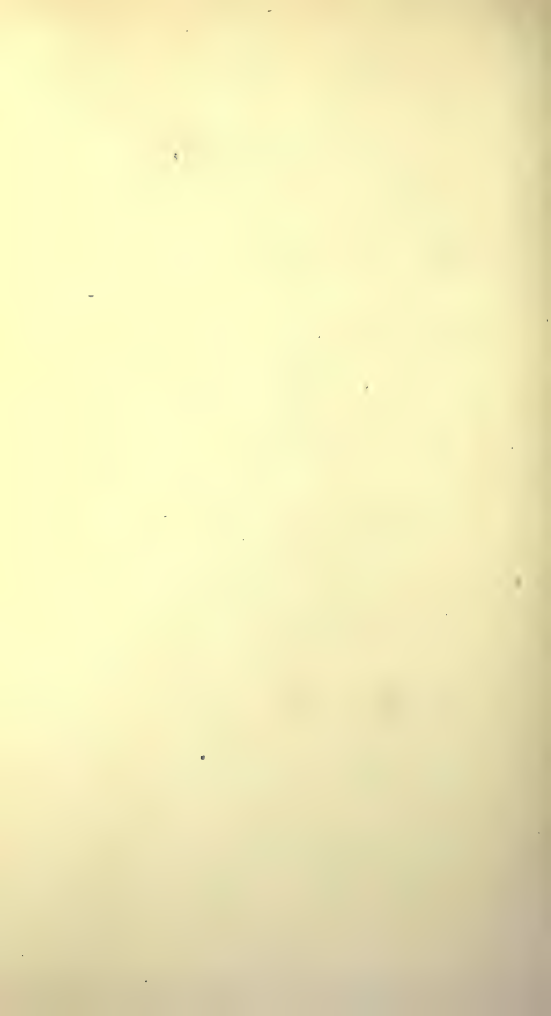
Dear voice, be happy every way,
A thousand changing tones among,
From little child's unfinished lay,
To angel's perfect song.

In dewy woods—fair, soft, and green,
Like morning woods are childhood's bowers—
Be like the voice of brook unseen
Among the stones and flowers—

A joyful voice, though born so low,
And making all its neighbours glad ;
Sweet, hidden, constant in its flow,
Even when the winds are sad.

So, strengthen in a peaceful home,
And daily deeper meanings bear,
And when life's wildernesses come,
Be brave and faithful there.

Try all the glorious magic range,
Worship, forgive, console, rejoice,
Until the last and sweetest change—
So live and grow, dear voice.



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